

# Wisdom Teeth

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Summary: There was nothing easy about losing who you were, even if it was only for a little while; and his memories had long since fallen away like snowflakesâ€"fast, fleeting, and frozen...

## 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*Lol. Okay, so, once again I've stolen a pairing from my sister, guiltily fallen kiiiind of in love with it, and then decided what better to do than write another fic about it? Haha and like\*\*\*\* everything I try to do, this has just turned into a continuous project rather than a final product! \*\***

**\*\*I'll apologize for the title because it is just plain awful, buuut since there are only like eight fics for this story I'm hoping people will overlook that XD. Additionally, this part is kind of pro-logeish, and intentionally short; because I'm trying to get a feel for where exactly I'm going to take this. \*\***

**\*\*Also; the rating is M for safety's sake and is subject to change; but I tend to try and follow more mature plot lines lol and because I do looove to be \_descriptive...\_teehee. ANYWAYS, read it, review it, tell me what you think so far and I'm gonna try to get the first, full chapter underway!\*\***

**\*\*\_.\_.\_.\_\*\***

**\*\*Wisdom Teeth.\*\***

The baby teeth had come and gone, losing lateral incisors and coughing up canines like quarters for a gumball machine; the decision was as effortless as it was involuntary, and he'd spent them recklessly. Forming the fragments of enameled memories that soon decayed and fell away, they left a mouth of perfect pearly whites as secondary replacements.

Although almost identical they were imposters, and would never substitute what he'd lost. They were bigger and brighter than before, but where baby teeth had cavities carved throughout their curvatures, these had matured flawlessly and almost falsely. They were sturdy, but empty, holding nothing more than themselves in place.

Jack sighed, wishing there was more feeling to breathe in rather than the emptiness that kept him constantly composed within chambers of crystallized karma. "It's a bitch," frosted lips muttered aloud, kicking clumps of freshly fallen snow, and clenching his staff as if to transfer all the pressure. There was nothing easy about losing who you were, even if it was only for a little while; and his memories had long since fallen away like snowflakes—fast, fleeting, and frozen.

Grounding his teeth together in place of words he couldn't form, Jack felt his heart constricting into the catalyst of an upcoming cold front. When it rained, it poured—but when Jack Frost cried, everything froze. It was a terrible transition for a teenager; falling between the fissures of icebergs his emotions had formed.

They matched the literal masses he'd spread throughout the arctic in every way; they were jagged, imperfect, and deceiving. Breaking through the surface level just barely, Jack was only shown in his most simple form, disguising the true symmetry that moved slowly and undetected, always giving him the impression he was standing still. He had always underestimated himself, and so had the world; which left both at the mercy of momentum—a momentum with the strength to smother forests in unbroken strides and sink whole cities into the incalculable depths.

\_I never meant for this to happen. I never \_\_\*\*wanted\*\*\_\_ this to happen, \_pressured thoughts began pounding and Jack's eyes darted around the emptiness in search of something he knew he wouldn't find—a friend.

The word alone was enough to kill him, but immortality wouldn't give him the satisfaction. He had died once, but fate had something more formidable in mind, and instead of leaving him to rest in peace it shattered him in pieces. Disrupted and disoriented, every time Jack attempted to embody his past life, the entity refused him, and the struggle had eventually left him numb.

Somewhere beneath the pale, milky skin however, a heart still beat, almost mockingly, forcing him to remember he was still very much alive. \_Life—he had never hated something so furiously, because somehow he felt as if he wasn't good enough for it. Why else would they have taken away his and then left him to live in this empty shell that had been outgrowing him for ages? It was supposed to be the other way around—you were supposed to grow up and grow out of things when they no longer fit—but somehow he had remained unchanging and the world outgrew him instead. He was like the extra piece to a puzzle that went out of print—he would never fit anywhere.

Drawing in another steady breath, he wished desperately to disappear, but the delicate, slender container clenched in his right hand was weighing him down. Five fingers furled around it even more tightly, and he could feel the intricate glass designs creating impressions

against his skin. They were all there; all except for his Wisdom Teeth. The consequence of what he may find there never seemed to outweigh the risk of removing them, but he was beginning to lose sight of himself again, fearing that eventually he'd have no choice.

Turning the capsule in circles, thoughtfully in front of his face, several frosted auras of aquamarine traced its outlines as iridescent shades of indigo and amethyst rose and fell in a spectrum of shapes; his memories shifting around inside like images in a kaleidoscope. He knew them all by heart, knew ever still-frame, every living breathing second he once shared with them; but their presence was always fading; \_his\_ presence was always fading.

\_You said you wouldn't ever leave me, \_Jack considered sadly, pressing his finger softly against a small, golden latch as the doors of multicolored glass popped open to reveal an array of old friends. Closing his eyes, the selection was preformed at random, running his fingertip along the soft, smooth surfaces and then bracing himself when the motion stopped and one tooth sank through the red-velvet.

Elevating overhead in spectacular frequencies of light, Jack's vision fractured as they burst into flames around him, melting every inch of snow until he could see the whole island burning.

"\_Get out of here," someone shouted through the smoke.\_

\_Jack squinted his eyes, but couldn't see. "No. I wont leave you."\_

"\_It's not a fucking question," the other boy had shouted, more forcefully than ever before. "There isn't any time left."\_

\_Brown eyes clouded with combustion and Jack knew he was right, but his heart and his head had gone to war with each other, and all his limbs had been paralyzed in the crossfire. "I-I can't," he stuttered his vocals betraying every syllable with fear.\_

\_Met with an aggravated sigh, the face emerging more closely into his line of vision was torn between the time they never had, and the emotions they struggled to express. "I'm serious Jack, this isn't time for your antics, the whole island is burning, and people are \_\_\*\*dying.\*\*\_\_"\_

\_He knew that already, the smell of charring flesh was inescapable and was curdling throughout the air, mixing in with the swirls and flashes of smoke and fire surrounding them. "Let me come with you," he begged, losing sight of his confidence, and sinking under the weight of guilt.\_

"\_No." \_

"\_Hiccup, pleaseâ€¦"\_

\_Several skinny hands reached forward and slammed against the others chest, pushing him backward with a strength Jack couldn't remember him having. "GO," he screamed. \_

\_Jack's eyes had gone helpless, "Butâ€¦".\_"\_

"\_NOW," he interjected, but Jack was somehow frozen amidst the heat.\_

"\_You can't make me," he attempted to argue, but Hiccup was becoming Stoic more and more every day, and Jack couldn't keep up. \_

"\_I swear to god Jack," there were tears beginning to form, as Hiccup struggled to remain in the false skin of his father that had never quiet fit him, "I'm this close to letting Toothless blast you if you don't get the fuck out of here."\_

"\_Okayâ€|" It was a soft sound, soft and sad, and so excruciating that it was unbelievable. He could hear the heavy puffs of steam come at him as the dragon broke into a forewarning grunt, transposing with the sound of the other's falling back as the legendary beast broke through their last remaining defenses, and spread forth a frayed canvas of leathery scales as the skeleton of wings shadowed every conceivable inch of Berkâ€|\_

"\_I have to go," Hiccup's head shook away second doubts, jumping onto his dragon before Jack could open his mouth and dissuade him.\_

\_His heart seemed to break, and he watched his best-friend ascend into the hurricane of inferno and electricity that crashed together in bursts of blue and clashed within a raging current of red. The struggle was snapping his heartstrings, and Jack ran as fast as he could in the opposite direction until his vision began to distort and the sights in front of him disappeared in little dots, until the world was black and he lost sight of everythingâ€|.\_

## 2. Chapter 2

\*\*okay, so usually i wouldn't post stuff so disorganized and choppy like this, but bear with me while I figure out the format for this! lol as of right now, the previous post is just going to be chapter one-not a prologue or anything really-and this ISN'T chapter two, but the rest of chapter one. (lol annoying I know, my bad!)\*\*

\*\*\_.\_.\_.\_\*\*

In one single, sudden flash the projection flickered away into a still-frame that faded out against reality; leaving Jack completely alone with his thoughts. \_Of all the memories\_, he shook his head disbelievingly, \_did it have to be that one?\_ Did he have to remember what he'd doneâ€"what he'd caused? Hiccup would've told him yes, and he could almost hear the sweet, subtle seriousness in his voice, urging Jack to face the consequences of his actions. \_You were my consequence though,\_ he reflected sadly, \_and I haven't been able to accept that in years.\_

Kicking up snow in furious bursts like a deranged woodland poltergeist, Jack watched the pure white consistency melt into soft earth and turn to slush. Shades of gray seemed to suit him, and although he had learned to like his new found knack for snow, the piercing purity often blinded him. Hunching his shoulders forward, he began to retrace his way around a narrow, winding pathway he had once known so well. They said once you leave home that you can never go

back againâ€"but Jack had never left, and part of him had never changed.

Born from Vikings and reincarnated from their folk-lore, Jack couldn't seem to leave Berk behind, couldn't stand to be away, couldn't handle losing the only thing he'd ever loved. But Hiccup had flown into the eye of the storm and Jack had followed, rushing forward onto the back of the first dragon he could find. It seemed like he was always chasing the boy down, since the first time they'd met it was a constant game of back and forth.

They were both tall, skinny, and slightly awkwardâ€"star-crossed friends from the beginning the way Hiccup told it, and Jack had always loved to agree. It was too perfect to last, and perhaps that was why Hiccup had crash-landed while Jack continued fallingâ€"why one had lost a leg, and the other a life.

Sighing, he stared through the evergreens at the lanky, five foot-eight mess of auburn hair and awkward smiles, hobbling along on his makeshift leg, completely unaware that he was being watched. Jack's breath caught in his throat as he began to walk closer, his heart never failing to beat faster, no matter how many times he'd done it before.

"Hey," he said softly, knowing it would evoke no response, ghosting sadly around the other boy in circles. Hiccup was smiling and it was breaking his heart, reaching his hand out gingerly, his fingers materialized into blue light as they collided with his skin. This never failed to happen, but Jack never failed to try.

**\*\*Three Years Earlier.\*\***

"\_It's f-freezing," Hiccup shivered.\_

"\_Don't look at me!" Jack raised his hands defensively, "It wasn't my brilliant idea to get stranded in a snow storm."\_

"\_Well it's not like I \_\_\*\*planned\*\*\_\_ this."\_

\_Jack laughed, "You're a walking disasterâ€"\_"\_

"\_It's an occupational hazardâ€"I know, I know," Hiccup said dismissively.\_

"\_Don't be like that," the brunette crawled closer, closing the space between them.\_

\_Hiccup shuffled away reluctantly, "Then don't be like this," he said nervously when he found Jack's left thigh pressed alongside his right.\_

"\_Then don't make me want to," he purred.\_

\_Groaning in frustration, several green eyes glared, "You're the worst best-friend ever."\_

\_Jack revealed a toothy grin, "Then I wouldn't be the best, would I?" he asked, snaking his arms suggestively around Hiccup's stomach. The other boy grinned innocently, staring up with eyes that drove Jack absolutely mad, but never said a word. Readjusting his grip, ever so

slightly, the taller boy could feel the muscles contracting in his friend's stomach.\_

"\_Why do you always do this?" he finally asked.\_

\_Jack leaned closer. "Isn't it obvious?" He awaited the same answer he knew he was likely to receive.\_

\_Hiccup withdrew this time, "S-should it be?" \_

"\_Why do you always have to play dumb," the brunette groaned, wishing this were easier to say. \_

"\_Years of experience," the smaller boy replied dully.\_

\_Sighing, Jack retreated, removing his arms, and re-folding them around his knees, which were drawn into his chest. "It really is bloody cold up here."\_

"\_Thank you for summing that up," Hiccup eyed him sarcastically, causing a more recognizable grin to form as Jack stuck his tongue out.\_

"\_Thank you for being a total dick," the brunette repeated, his voice rising and falling identically with the recreation. \_

"\_Because that comment was reasonable."\_

\_Jack received the words with a sarcastic eye-roll, and returned them with a slight, "Maybe you should try being less of all this," he worded in a way he knew the green-eyed boy abhorred. \_

"\_Are you proud of yourself, Jack?" \_

\_The look in his eyes mirrored a disappointed parent, but Jack simply stared, unable to sit in such close proximity and be denied the simple pleasure that just weeks ago he'd begun to crave. It wasn't as if he had even done anything that out of the normal—they had been friends for longer than either could form finite memories, and so contact and closeness were like a package deal, but lately the other had been building up walls. Walls that even Jack couldn't always get around, but the red-head had always been better at getting under people's skin, while he himself had enough difficulty relating to anyone. He could hear Hiccup breathing, and repositioning himself closer, sensing his friends shift in seriousness.\_

"\_You can still sit by me," Hiccup spoke up shyly, avoiding direct eye contact.\_

"\_You told me to stop," Jack spoke coldly, evidently taking this as personally as Hiccup knew he would.\_

"\_Well maybe I didn't mean it," his cheeks began to flood with color, leaving the other to interpret what it meant when even Hiccup was unsure why he'd begun to blush. \_

\_However, it took no more than a millisecond for Jack's playful disposition to latch onto the words and run five miles farther with them than he should have; and a coy smile stitched itself heart-wrenchingly across his perfect bone structure, "You want me to

keep you warm?" \_

He missed warmth; he missed the intimacy and the heat that used to transfer so magnetically between them, and this time he hadn't needed his box of teeth to remember how easy it had been to get lost in each other; but lately, it felt like he was the one who was lost and that Hiccup had stopped looking.

-.-.-.-.

\*\*also. reviews would really be nice lol and if its any incentive; my new policy has become "review4review" so if you leave me one, I'll return the favor. I figure its a win-win lol you get a new story AND a new reader. Steal of a deal :)\*\*

### 3. Chapter 3

\*\*Okay! First things first! Sorry about the delay in updating! I got an ulcer on my eye o\_O and couldn't really do much that involved seeing bahaha. Anddd secondly, oh my gawsh, the enthusiasm I've gotten for this fic already is amazing, and you are all incredible for leaving me so many nice reviews! \*\*

\*\*So, to...  
><strong>

\*\*\_Yaoifan101: \_\*\*\_mwahah \_\_my baby sister! thank you for being the first to comment this fic, even though (as you didn't fail to point out) I pretty much sat next to you repeating "leave me a comment, leave me a comment" for a day and a half! Haha also...totally added some Bunny in this next chapter for you (and who am i kidding? for me too! hahah)\_

\*\*\_Kaytil: \_\*\*\_lol thank you for my second review! haha i hope my sister's comment didn't guilt you into leaving one, however, it is appreciated none the less. And alright, but if you change your mind, I'm always down to support a fellow supporter! Plus I love all kinds of stories, I just have only written a select few lol. Ah, I'm glad the first chapter was suspenseful, because tbh I had no idea what I was writing at first. Hopefully the third and fourth chapters can keep up with the first two as far as capturing your interest!\_

\*\*\_Guest: \_\*\*\_lol well this wasn't really a comment about my story, however I am sad to say I cannot help you with the fem/hiccup search-can't say I've come across any of those.  
Sorry!\_

\*\*\_Wolf-of-ink: \_\*\*\_Thank you so much! Its still sort of a major work in progress, but I hope you like the direction I'm taking it so far! lol and bear with me, I know its a scatterbrained plot so far. (buttt as I like to say, as long as there's some good stuff, continuity can lag a little lol)\_

\*\*\_neonlights: \_\*\*\_mwahah yes! I have official forced another reader to become emotionally invested! lol i've found i have an uncanny knack for that-so i'm just going to keep hoping its a good thing! thanks for the review and hope you find the next installments to your liking!\_

\*\*\_wally's girlfriend: A\_\*\*\_HH. I am in love with you officially for comparing my writing to water-itsssss basically my favorite metaphorical tool mwahah. And oh gosh, definitely blushing at this comment. I remember when I first got it, because I turned to my sister like BOOYAH! lol and shush, I'm sure your stories aren't lame; trust me I have a collection of EMBARASSINGLY bad writing all over my computer-like three hundred page shitty stories worth about people in 'high school' that i wrote in like 6th grade, thinking everyone just had sex and was 17 the whole time. Anywho, I'm also glad you appreciate my random twist on a plot so far, and as I've been saying to everyone, I really hope the next two chapters don't disappoint!\_

\*\*\_Emily: \_\*\*\_Oh yes, there will be much and more of this fic! the trouble i have with starting projects is that I never seem to want to finish them, so you can expect this to probably go on for awhile. updates may take me some time in-between, but I hardly ever abandon a project unfinished!\_

\*\*\_animefangirl55:\_\*\*\_ ah lol my bad, I tend to write such sappy shit sometimes that i forget how incredibly depressing it all sounds lol; however, I really love to delve deeper into the depths of true, human emotion...so get ready for a roller coaster of it! and sorry for the delay again! but here are some substantially longer chapters to make up for it :D\_

\*\*\_zexioniezo: \_\*\*\_lol one, i love how you're the third person to tell me that I don't have to read your stories, just because i thought it was so funny people kept mentioning it, but nonsense, don't call them crap! I'm sure they're awesome lol and I'm almost determined to just go read and leave everybody comments ANYWAYS, just to prove it :) Buuut thank you for all your support!\_

\*\*\_ausherlock: \_\*\*\_Yay, thank you so much for the compliments towards my writing style, usually i'm afraid it offsets people because I can get rather long-winded and wax-poeitc, but its great to find people who appreciate it! And oh god yes it is a lovely pairing to stumble onto-my sister brought it up to me and I was like "oh..yeah...kinddd of iN LOVE." anddd your wish is granted-more story!\_

\*\*OKAY. OKAY. OKAY. STORY TIME!\*\*

\*\*PS: this chapter is a little more serious, blahblah, but I think I did alright with mixing it up enough to be interesting. (plus I find the flashbacks always help lol)\*\*

\*\*HOPE YOU ALL ENJOY! And comments are insanely appreciated; they give me all my motivation :)\*\*

\*\*\_.\_.\_.\_\*\*

\*\*Chapter Three.\*\*

Forever seventeen and fashioned from an inexhaustible cache of cliché's and consequencesâ€"Jack had developed a hard time taking himself seriously. For starters, let's take '\_Eternal Youth'â€"existing as, perhaps, the most envied combination, any mere mortal would sell their soul just for the chance to obtain it, and yet here he was getting it for free.



Jack laughed bitterlyâ€"wasn't that ironic, he thoughtâ€"trading a living, breathing life for a fixed, unchanging illusion? â€|Yes, eternal youth \_appeared\_ desirable, but it had come with its fair share of catchesâ€"A Guardianship and the Winter Solstice to be exactâ€"the epitome of youthful preservation, and the literary season of death and decline; thus marking the first of his inconsistencies.

The second followed, technically with a third, and the package deal produced the final bi-product of Jack's illogical existence. It were as if life and death had been forged into a staff instead of a scythe, and Jack had been deemed one of all tradesâ€"finding himself caught at a crossroads, intersecting at '\_unhindered authority\_' and '\_tactless control.' \_

It was more power than he'd ever had over anything, and more responsibility than he'd ever been suited for; yet, suddenly, there he stoodâ€"\_A Guardianâ€"\_a protector. Always too quick to discredit himself, unable to see any silver lining, Jack sighed, \_but that hardly seems like a title fit for a failure\_. He couldn't help itâ€"nothing made senseâ€"and no one could tell him just quiet who he was anymore, but somehow they were still telling him who to be. The pressure was devastating.

It was a time for balance in which none existed. Within three years, you'd think that he'd at least started to '\_get over it'\_â€"although the phrase melted from his mind and into soft, angst filled breathes; exhaling rigidly against the air as if to secure whatever dignity hadn't drown beneath the 95% accuracy of a flashflood of flaws that still lapped and pooled around his feet. How was this still breaking him down? He wondered answerless, three years should have been everythingâ€"should have made or broken himâ€"but somehow he'd managed to stay wholeâ€"almost.

It felt as if they'd done everything possible to refuse him even the most basic elements of himself; replacing a set of warm, inviting brown eyes with a pair of paralyzing, unnatural, and offsetting blue one's instead; while his hair had been stripped of all its color and allowed to exist in the absence of it, framing ghost-like strands around his forehead, falling messily across into his eyelashes.

He'd kept his name sureâ€"but what for? \_So I can sign up for the fantasy book club?\_ The thought formed acrimoniously as the youth mocked the metamorphosis that had taken every mechanical, sensible, and physical law out of existence. Because reincarnation always came back metaphysically, none of the physical principles were needed any longer, and attention to detail had been lost. Sighing, Jack could sense himself derailing, fighting freely against the futile desire to recede from his preposition, but found he was still fixed and frozen on a one way track.

Destined to live only in the past, Jack realized that all he did now was exist; however, the deeper significance faded into scattered flurries, compliments of his newly, non-refundable vocation. The introspection had formed intricate webs to ensnare him, but the snow gave him clarity in the purest form of foresight. He supposed it made perfect sense, all these conclusions he fell just a breath short of confirming, but Jack fought helplessly against them like a screaming new born.

Three years ago he'd been both constructed \_and\_ broken downâ€” Three years ago he'd been the way he'd been since birthâ€”The year after that he'd been half a corpse at the bottom of a lakeâ€”Then, then on the cusp of the autumn equinox, they'd come for him at last. Who \_they\_ were, he had never fully grasped; although dead, lifeless, and two years downâ€”he had sensed the eerie whisper of life come and go.

Jack closed his eyes, and then reopened them, trying to see if anything had changed. He pinched himself next, but retracted dejectedly when his skin was still cold. Even when he finally admitted the things that had happened, Jack found no harmonious coexistence, just the lingering expressions of self-doubt and over speculation. He hadn't been this person in his whole life, but the disillusioned boy had been forced to focus on the symbolic now that the literal world had fallen from his grasp; however the ideology refused him just as effortlessly as reality always had.

Threeâ€”in and of itself, fit togetherâ€”it was supposed to be the perfect balance; symbolizing the cyclical concept of life in its three, primary phasesâ€”creation, destruction, and preservation. They moved in cycles like the seasonsâ€”their speeds were all relative, and they were hardly predictable; unsound in their stations, but unfailing in their repetitionâ€”the symbolism of three should have saved him, but Jack felt as if nothing applied to him anymore. Sighing, however, as he lost gradual details to thick blankets of white, Jack tried to remember what it felt likeâ€”to \_truly\_ be coldâ€”to truly feelâ€”well, anything.

\_Is it not enough to simply exist?\_ Jack's staff spun around expertly overheadâ€”\_or was all this redecorating really necessary as well?\_ His metaphysical state of mind melted down the clichÃ©s into a series of contradictions once more\_. They had given him a healthy body that would forever function accordingly, but he would never grow. They expected him to protect, but left him defenseless. Expected him to find his center when they had left nothing but a holeâ€”|

And worst of allâ€”they expected him to move onâ€”when he'd never let go. \_They expect too much and give too little\_, Jack thought selfishly, knowing full well that he was overcompensating for a series of emotions that he was unwilling to show. Instead, he fell backward, weightlessly into the snow with a \_crunch\_, and began to move his arms and legs in methodical motions.

\_"Snow Angels?" Hiccup asked, standing overhead. "Really, Jack?"  
\_

\_The other boy stuck out his tongue and continued to spread the snow into a celestial shape. \_

"\_What's the point?" Hiccup shrugged, never seeing value in the unnecessary. "You're just going to ruin it anyways."\_

"\_Thanks for summing that up," Jack quipped in a nasally voice.\_

"\_I don't sound like that," the other argued defensively.\_

"\_Hmm," Jack's arms flapped back and forth. "Whining, complaining, and never satisfied? I thought it was rather convincing."\_

\_Hiccup nudged him playfully, "Shut up."\_

"\_Don't ruin it!" Jack yelled, staring straight up, trying to locate his friend within such a limited range.\_

\_A pair of bright green eyes popped out over his, drawing Jack's backward, then straight up, unflinching. "Or what?"\_

\_Never one to be easily outfoxed, Jack's face twisted up with a cross between a scowl and a pout. "Or I'll ruin \_\_\*\*you\*\*\_\_, " he threatened unconvincingly. \_

"\_Says the person making snow angels," Hiccup grinned, still upside down in Jack's eyes.\_

"\_Oh whatever," he ignored the banter-battle that he was clearly losing today. "Toothless makes them all the time."\_

"\_Toothless is a dragon, Jack."\_

"\_A dragon who appreciates the art of snow angels," Jack smirked, grinning over to the large black mass snuggling every which way against the snow. "Isn't that right buddy?"\_

\_The dragon snorted delightedly, always as in tune with Jack as he was with Hiccup, continuing to curl into his contorted disfiguration of a cherub. \_

\_Hiccup rolled his eyes, "Who knew both my best-friends would turn out equally as immature."\_

\_Jack and Toothless grunted in unison. "And who knew you'd always be such a stick in the mud."\_

"\_Well," several hands repositioned around slender hips. "Some of us in the real world have responsibilitiesâ€"unlike you two."\_

\_Jack lifted his arms, holding his hands out to Hiccup who gathered them in his intuitively. "You callin' me cold blooded?" He asked, glancing back at Toothless with a 'no-offense' smile as he was pulled forward. \_

\_Hiccup grinned coyly as Jack found his feet. "Well you're certainly no angel."\_

\_They were standing a centimeter apart, hands still tangled in an awkward set of fists. "What am I then?" Jack coaxed on, challenging the eye contact.\_

"\_Ahâ€" " Hiccup paused with his mouth in mid-air, closing it softly as his eyes began to study the question more seriously.\_

\_Flooding with color, the other boy gently let go of the hands he didn't realize he was still holding, and stepped back uncomfortably because this side of Hiccup always scared him a little. It was the side that could get so seriousâ€"so certainâ€"the side that could reach down so deep into a person and pull out something they never knew was there. Jack swallowed. "Wellâ€|" he prompted the over-extended pause, then nervously tried to take it back. "Nevermind

Hiccup, I'm justâ€|"\_

"\_Perfect."\_

"â€|\_being sarcastic," Jack trailed off, losing his words almost as quickly as his volume. Pausing, swallowing, and turning towards the ground, he managed to ask, "What did you say?"\_

\_Smiling widely, warmly, and way too whimsically, Hiccup glanced shyly from Jack to the undisrupted outline he'd left imprinted flawlessly in the snow in front of them. "I said," he cleared his throat, "That I think you're perfect."\_

Frowning downward at the huge, hideous handprint and disheveled symmetry of snow where his feet had attempted to stand clear of his creation, Jack kicked the rest of the angel away with tears in his eyes. "Well you were wrong," he cursed, discouraged by the differences. \_I'm not perfect, \_he stared down at the avalanche of angst and snow he'd left in place of completion. \_I'm a disaster.

—

The thin, salty serum quickly crackled though, and crystallized into place, forming little diamond-dew drops in the corners of his eyes. For the life of him he couldn't seem to cry, and the inability both laughed and cursed him at the same time. \_"Who knew both my best-friends would turn out equally as immature." \_The sentence escaped into his train of thought without warning. \_That's me alright\_, he bit his bottom lip so hard it began to bleedâ€"\_Jack-The-Never-Seriousâ€"Jack-The-Can't-Handle-Commitmentâ€"Jack-The-Start-Acting-Your-Age-Alreadyâ€"\_all things that he'd been told countless times, and all things that had been turned against him in this cruel twist of fate.

"\_You really don't get itâ€"do you Jack?"\_ The sage-like voice rose in the steady rustling of the underbrush, fading in and out of his reach, and subduing his senses in a swaying rhythm like hypnosis. The bark on the trunk of an old oak began to bend and buckle beneath the weight of ancient sorcery, unfolding into the outlines of a familiar face. The knot in the tree protruded overhead like the hood of a cloak, and several branches bent and folded into fingers that intertwined thoughtfully.

Jack glanced towards the features carved throughout the rough curvatures and locked eyes challengingly with Father Time. "Get \_what?" he sneered uncooperatively. "That you've successfully ruined my life? No, thanks, I got that part."

The tree creaked, groaning as a steady gust of wind released a sigh. \_"Arrogance is what got you here Jackâ€"and unchallenged, it will keep you here."\_

"Wonderful," Jack paced in circles. "So, I couldn't even die correctly, is that what you're trying to tell me?"

The entity, however, ghosted through the spitefulness, and ensued the spirituality the boy had never understood. \_"Death has nothing to do with it."\_

"Of course not," crystal eyes rolled back as he turned to holler, "Because that would only \_make sense!"\_

"\_You're running out of timeâ€|"\_

"For what!" Jack shouted. "Why wont you just tell me what you want from me!" His vocals tore helplessly though he air, but like the trees, the spirit was ancient and unmovingâ€"impossible to sway with immediacy when it was built with age and grown in time.

"\_You're running out of time,"\_ the words echoed, plaguing the boy with endless repetition. "\_If you cannot find the meaning of life, then living is only the absence of death,"\_ the enlightenment rolled around him in an eminent whisper, "\_And if living is simply not dyingâ€"then you merely subsist."\_

\_I only exist,\_ Jack recalled from earlier, trying to tie it into the philosophical ramblings of Father Time that never made any sense to him. No thought was safe however, and the ancient wielder of providence stole Jack's effortlessly.

"\_And you will only ever exist until you learn your centerâ€"until you establish a source of gravity Jack, then the pieces shall float amiss."\_

"What pieces!?" Jack demanded, frequently searching for something sound in all the voice was saying. "And I keep telling you, I \_have\_ a center!" he argued flustered with keeping all the questions and instructions' straight. "Fun," he stated, "I'm the Guardian of \_fun\_."

"\_And how much \_fun\_ are you having, Jack?"\_

The question stung, swelling his pride insufferably, and slipping past his lips in a silent, "Noneâ€|"

"\_Then you have lost yourself Jack Frost, and also, never truly discovered yourself."\_

"Butâ€|I'mâ€|I'mâ€" "

"\_More than just an adjective," \_Father Time interrupted, the sky dimming and clouding in sync with his seriousness. "\_You must learn to express the world in more than merely words and titles. Life is not an association Jack, it's a full-time commitment."\_

"Am I the only one who remembers the whole \_dead\_ thing?" Jack fumed, feeling taunted, and unrightfully mocked. "How do you expect me to \_feel\_ anything?"

"\_Jack, Jack, Jack,"\_ the tone turned parental and the face began to disappear. "\_There is a clock that ticks for all of us, but where some stop, other's turn backâ€"just as the ending of one life gives birth to another."\_

"So...,you're telling me I've beenâ€|reset?" He blinked, envisioning the chambers of his heart coiling into the cogs of a pocket-watch.

"\_Rewound,"\_ the voice corrected, fading even farther. "\_You are both racing and re-tracing," \_the voice phrased cryptically. "\_You are both the future and the past,"\_ the complexities intertwined, "\_But

time waits for no one Jack, and your hands have fallen into place—the rest might outrun you, but the present is catching up, and there are only so many numbers you can hide behind until you too have lost your face—"

"Wait!" his voice broke against the echo that effortlessly overshadowed his desperation. "Please—don't go yet! I still don't—"

"\_Understand—" the barely audible response blended into the barrage of dead leaves as they blew backwards and fell lifelessly. "\_Remember the words Jack—remember and you will—"

Then silence. Absolute silence.

Jack collapsed; knees in the snow, with his whole body bent forward, hands pressed deeply in imprints. Since before he could remember, after his reawakening that is, these strange and surreal visits had been taking place. Even though he was estranged from the Guardians, Father Time had played the paternal role in their up-bringing—although crotchety, old Grandfather suited him much better in Jack's opinion.

Never content with parlor tricks, the ageless entity always spoke in a series of rhymes and riddles; convinced that the core of higher learning came from the ability to interpret and perceive. However, Jack found it more than just \_difficult\_ to praise the wisdom of words that plagued him from the moment he'd awaken, all covered in phosphorescent plankton, to this very second where he sat pale and plastered.

\_Clock, face, time, hands—\_ Jack attempted to string everything together into bullet points, but found the meaning lost within too many metaphors—metaphors that had absolutely nothing to do with the last time they'd spoken. Sighing, Jack considered the previous encounter, hearing the nursery rhyme rhythm run through his head instantly before letting it roll off his tongue.

"\_Water weighs, while matter sinks\_, " he began slowly. "\_Displace the value, the missing link—" \_Jack remembered systematically, "\_That floats above, in drifting shards, but cannot freeze, a house of cards—"

But he rolled his eyes unreceptively, just because it rhymed didn't mean it made sense, and he'd established quiet distaste for poetics. \_Water weighs?\_ He thought, \_what the hell was that supposed to mean? Weigh—what? —just—\*\*weighs\*\*—?\_

Then he shook his head, "\_Weights —\*\*down\*\*\_, stupid," \_Hiccup's phantom voice of reason reappeared, "\_That's why the matter's —\*\*sinking\*\*\_." Even in his subconscious, Hiccup was still unspoken and unfailing, but Jack could've really used a friend right now, one that could step outside the restrictions of thought.

Sheepishly unsure of who else to trust, Jack closed his eyes, as if maybe it could cancel out the reality of his right foot falling in a swift, two-step tap that provoked an almost instantaneous echo of thumping.

"This had better be good Mate."

Hesitantly, Jack reopened his eyes, one at a time, realizing E. Aster had arrived in record time. "Iâ€" he began in a self-conscious sputter, unsure of what he even intended to say.

"Well, out with it then," Bunny tapped his foot impatiently, always cautious of Jack's intentions.

The rest came out as quietly as snow falling. "â€"I didn't know who else to go toâ€"|"

Eyebrows furrowed, and the Australian took a hesitant hop forward, "Mate? Is everythingâ€"|"

"No." Jack's voice caught unbelievably, and cracked under pressure. "No, it's not," he sniffled, still unsure of how Bunny would receive all this after months had gone by between their last visit.

Much to his surprise, however, the rabbit caught Jack's falling features sadlyâ€"as the Guardian of Hope, he recognized a lack there of just as easily; like an Easter egg hidden for a small child, the look on the boy's face was too obvious to ignore. "Is it the nightmares again?" the elder asked softly. "I thought they'd gone away by now. Have you asked Sandyâ€"|"

"It's not that," Jack shook his head childishly, always feeling half his age whenever Bunny traded their playful banter for soft-spoken words.

"Well what then?" he rested a paw on the boy's shoulder, giving it a gentle squeeze. "You know you can tell meâ€"|"

And that's when Jack collapsed into the mess of fur cryingâ€"too shaken by the actual contact that he shattered with one touch. "He said I'm running out of time," came the muffled fragments as his arms held on as tightly as they could to something solid. "Please, I don't want to disappear," his face pressed closer, "Don't let me disappear."

Caught off guard by the embrace, Aster paused before putting the pieces together. "Who did?" he asked calmly, rubbing Jack's back soothingly as he tactfully forced conversation in place of crying.

"F-father Time."

"Ahh, good ol' \_Tick'n'Tock\_ himself," Bunny nodded in understanding, "Let me guessâ€"still haven't solved ya' riddle?"

Jack slumped backward out of the embrace, embarrassed. "Exactly," he sighed, before stumbling into a long-winded explanation that Bunny sat patiently all the way through.

In theory, he supposed they were an unseemly pair, but opposites had never stopped attracting for Jack, and he'd found the most unusual friendship in his equinoctial opposite. While Jack had occupied the Autumnal, Bunny had been initiated during the Vernal Equinoxâ€"making them opposite and yet the same. Supporting the seasons of life and death, they held an unspoken bond that eluded the other guardians, and brought them closer than either had imagined. It was the closest

thing Jack had found to a friend; but even then, Bunny had always acted more like the father he couldn't remember having.

Sighing, Aster pushed himself back upright after Jack had dwindled off in conclusion. "Y'know I can't solve this for ya' mate," he offered sympathetically, always internally conflicted over the boy's suffering that never seemed to end.

"I know," Jack responded softly, features downcast and drown in emotion.

"Mine wasn't easy either," he continued his attempts to empathize, but the truth was Jack's riddle had been more complex than all the other guardians combine, and he hadn't the faintest idea how to deconstruct the meaning. "But keep ya' chin up, because it isn't hopeless, they all have answers Mate."

"But what if I can't find mine in time?" Blue eyes poured into vibrant viridian shades that reminded him so very much of Hiccup's. "What if I disappear?"

"Ya' not going to disappear," Aster assured him protectively, "Don't think for a second I'd let ya' get off that easy-do ya?"

Jack cracked a faint smile, "No, I guess not."

"That's it," Bunny nodded, more enthusiastically, "Now buck up mate, and try not to look so miserable" "it doesn't suit ya' in the slightest."

"Only if you stop being so damn nice," the grin grew, falling back into more playful routine, "I'm starting to think you've been huffing a little too much egg dye."

"Oh, bugger that," Bunny took a swat, returning the grin in a mutual understanding as he summoned the warp zone beneath his feet. "Take care Jack," he smiled once more, and then disappeared down into a labyrinth of twisting tunnels.

Sighing, Jack stepped away from their conversation feeling, if anything, relieved. \_For now at least\_, he considered dimly, until the actuality sank back in, and drown him within the unreliability of reassurance.

#### 4. Chapter 4

\*\*EEK. WARNING: i jump back into loling mode in this chapter; so it's kind of light compared to the previous...although i think you'll find it rather satisfyingggg. ALSO: lol feel free to ask me wtf their weird conversation flashback means (from when their small) because unless you get the wording just right it doesn't make sense; but i think i tweaked it enough.\*\*

\*\*ANYWAYS; ENJOY THE FREEBIE CHAPTER (cause lets face it i owed you guys!)\*\*

\*\*\_.\_.\_.\_\*\*

\*\*Chapter Four.\*\*



As Jack stared unfamiliarly through eyes as blue as the ocean, and as transparent as he was, the boy was forced to shield them from the unchanging skyline. Although overcast with opalescent shapes, it was emitting powerful frequencies, and causing his head to cloud within spectrums that had once refused his darker shades. "Eyes like icicles and hair like hoarfrost," Jack strung the words together like a nursery rhyme, then rolled his eyes; as if being condemned to a life of wintertime wasn't bad enough, they'd given him a dress codeâ€"permanently. \_And not so much as a casual Friday,\_ Jack thought incredulously, shaking his head and swatting his staff aimlessly in the air.

Still grieving the absence of enlightenment and the loss of situational clarity, the previous day left Jack at stage one of seven: \_Shock and Denial.\_ The idea of solving his riddle reminded him too much of his teethâ€"and it was just too much memory to force upon oneself that the very idea had overloaded, then melted his brain.

He knew the "words" he must rememberâ€"in fact, they were hard to forget when each line and every letter curved eloquently in crystallized cursive, wrapping in a translucent spiral around the length of his staff. He knew which knots to press his palms against too, how to close his eyes, and open his mind until a brilliant flash of blue illuminated the words into script.

However, that was the beauty of denial Jack had decided smugly, relishing in the opportunity to rediscover the bliss of ignorance he was once acclaimed for emitting. Instead, rather than fall victim to actuality, Jack fell into footage of his favorite distractionâ€"Hiccup. Who else? If anything could possibly take his mind and tweak it to a different setting, that skinny, little twig was the only surefire solution.

Summoning a soft snowstorm, delicate flakes fell in intricate patterns, dusting over every conceivable surface, as Jack searched for fingerprints of past crimes and forgotten times. His memory was all around him, and Jack realized it was probably misleading to say he'd forgotten all of it. It was only the pivotal, life-changing things that he'd lost to dental hygiene, although the moment he said it, Jack wished he'd flossed moreâ€"maybe then they wouldn't have been gone so quickly.

Walking casually through the dirt and cobblestone pathways of Berk, as they wound indistinguishably through the forest and the village, beneath the collecting weight of snow, Jack was in constant search of evidence. Arguably, almost every inch of the terrain was covered in over-lapping sets of prints and identifiable moments, but with his finicky memory, every round was like a game of \_Russian Roulette.\_ There were always six available slots, the same as Jack always had options, but only one was every spring-loaded to shoot him in the face. And this time the bullet hit him right between the eyes with the most fundamental fragment of his childhood, almost amazed he'd kept it to himself.

Pulling his foot out of a rotten, half-petrified squash (Which he was still confused why he didn't just go right through), a wrinkled waver wriggled his lips into an irrepressible smile. \_And to think we became best-friends over vegetables,\_ Jack grinned, transposing the

scenery around him with the spliced, still-frames surfacing in his mind.

They were the first two little tikes to be dropped off at the daycare—that, believe it or not, Gobber used to run as part of his fulfillment for the duty of being the "Youth Resources" representative. Although it did eventually expand and lead to dragon training, Jack was always convinced that Stoic had made the whole position up just to keep Hiccup out of his hair; and so Jack always loved Hiccup for being a handful, or else they may have never met.

No more than a centimeter off in height, and only a mere six inches away from each other, they looked practically identical if it weren't for their eyes. Skinny as can be, seven year old Hiccup swung his legs back and forth beneath the bench and scooted closer to the boy he'd never seen before, who couldn't stop shaking his foot.

"I'm Hiccup."

"I'm adopted."

"Nah," Hiccup waved it off. "Cause this one time, my dad was all 'you're adopted,' he mimicked. "And then so I was like 'you're **stupid**'—except my dad's name is Stoic," he shrugged conclusively.

"Dad's are idiots I think," Jack laughed. "Cause my step-dad's all old and can't remember anything, so he reminds me like **everyday**! And I'm like 'okay, well thanks a lot dumby, tell me something I don't know!'"

"Hah-hah seriously!" Hiccup's hands shot above him excitedly, "**Total** idiots!"

"So stupid," Jack continued, "that they don't even **know** how stupid they are!" Eyes bulged unfathomably, then wrinkled into the bridge of his nose in confusion. "Cause mine usually looks really **impressed**," he paused, "Yeah, that's right, **impressed**," the brunette nodded. "He always looks **impressed** with himself."

"Oh my god, oh my god! I know **exactly** what look you mean!" Hiccup bounced, enthralled at the idea someone wanted to talk to him for once. "It's like they think they're better cause they're big." He began to gesture dramatically with a deep voice. "It's like '**hello, I'm wearing a pointy hat and have very broad shoulders for a man with a mustache**'. **Rawr, rawr, rawr!**'"

"So true!" Jack screeched, "After work my dad screams at me, like it's **my** fault he has to go," his eyes widened sarcastically. "Like, good job dad, sorry I'm SEVEN!"

"Do they want a gold star or something?"

"For real," Jack agreed. "What babies."

Hiccup shook his head, "I don't ever want to be like that."

"Me either," Jack announced, narrowing his eyes. "I heard," he began seriously, glancing back and forth before leaning over in a whisper,

"that old people's brains turn into vegetables!"\_

"\_Gross!" Hiccup threw a zip-lock back at the ground; staring at his carrot sticks in horror. "\_\_\*\*Not\*\*\_\_ cool grandpa, why don't you try staying dead next time!" he leaned over them, stomping with his foot.\_

\_Jack nodded, "That means we'll have stupid brains too."\_

\*\*\*\*\_\*\*And\*\* we're eating old people," the redhead stuck his tongue out. "They taste \_\*\*\_horrible\_\_."\_\*\*

"\_Like wrinkles and sadness."\_

\_Hiccup shook his head angrily, "No \*\*wonder\*\* they said grandpa went to live on his 'farm'."\_

"\_All lies."\_

"\_\*\*All\*\*\_\_ lies," the other nodded in agreement. \_

\_The brunette beamed suddenly, "I like you!"\_

\_The other shrugged, "Me too."\_

"\_No, stupid, you're supposed to say you like me too."\_

"\_Oh," Hiccup hesitated self-consciously, "well then, I like you too!"\_

"\_Wanna be friends?"\_

"\_Only if you do," the smaller boy said shyly. \_

"\_Good," the brunette smiled widely, shoving his hand forward into Hiccup's and shaking it up and down, "I'm Jack."\_

\_Hiccup's face twisted in an unreceptive, blank sort of confusion, "â€|I thought you said your name was adopted?"\_

The conversation faded off almost as quickly as it had come to him, losing continuity within the nonsensical conversations they'd had as childrenâ€"too old for their own age-group, and constantly engaging some debate or crusade against the world. Jack was still grinning about Hiccup being convinced that his name was literally \_adopted \_and how he used to think the expression 'being a vegetable' was literal; causing himself and Hiccup to abandon eating them for months, convinced they would turn old.

"Hiccup!" A girls voice ghosted straight through Jack's back, causing his eyes to roll. \_Astrid.\_

Now, in his own defense, he didn't hate her. Jack was just merely impulsively jealous of every waking minute they spent togetherâ€"that wasn't hatred though right? He thought humorously. \_Nah, Astrid's a good shit, \_he shook his head, choosing not to watch as Hiccup greeted her with the usual embrace. It wasn't his fault; Jack had told himself this a hundred times; he was gone and she was there. It's not like he expected Hiccup's entire life to stop just because

he wasn't in it, but sometimes it hurt to know how easily he'd accommodated the absence.

Then as he was walking back toward the sanctity of his seclusion, Jack realized another bullet lodged in back; locking eyes with the shadowy corner that crept, and wound around to the back of Hiccup's house. Jack sighed, they used to roll around each other so easily, and yet with infinite struggle, but their collisions happened more often than not; frequently ending in a simultaneous tangle of teeth and fists. \_That was the first time actually,\_ he made the gentle correction, stopping to consider the first crossed boundary between them, as well as the delicate dental outline that survived across his shoulder in a faint, but visible scar.

"\_Get off of me," Hiccup shoved back forcefully.\_

\_Jack didn't listen. "I don't want to."\_

"\_You're being weird again," Hiccup insisted, his back pressed against the side of his house with Jack's every outline pressed up against him.\_

"\_Just this once," Jack leaned in closer, "Don't fight it so hard."\_

\_The emerald eyed teen had gone quiet, shivering beneath the grip around his wrists as it transferred to his waist, "Jack," he stammered, pressing flat against the wall.\_

\_Talk about being stuck between a rock and a hard place, Jack grinned, repeating the other boy's name twice as softly. "Hiccup."\_

"\_I don'tâ€" his voice cracked as Jack's other hand shifted towards his stomach as well, holding him fixedly, "I don't know if this is a goodâ€"|"\_"

"\_It's a great idea," Jack murmured against his lips, closing his eyes as he sank into the sweet softness of the other's mouth.\_

\_Breathless and paralyzed, Hiccup's eyes fluttered before shutting, releasing a frustrated groan when teeth pulled gently at his bottom lip, and wrapping his fists around Jack's forearms to keep from collapsing. \_

\_Tightening and loosening his grip involuntarily, Jack finally pulled away out of breath, and feigning confidence to cover his evident embarrassment.\_

\_The boy across from him was bright red, the coloration causing his freckles to pop twice as vibrantly across the deepening shade on the bridge of his nose. "Fuck you," he shook his head flustered, delivering a fist that Jack caught, and tumbled them into a brawl of black-eyes and bight-marks.\_

Walking away from the scene, Jack was flushed and bubbly off the adrenaline rush, but shaking his head discouragingly at the idea that perhaps if he'd had some self-control, then maybe they'd still be together now instead of on opposite sides of two way glass. Sighing

and kicking up snow as he continued his descent he began to chant, "And there went the Jack without a Jill, tumbling back down like an asshole-," he chimed in with a sing-songy voice, "because he couldn't even follow the first part of the song, chasing after some green eyed boy instead of fetching that fucking pail of water."

\_Old habits die hard, right? \_Jack considered mischievously, focusing unintentionally on one word in particular, \_and it sure as hell wasn't 'die.'\_ His grin grew as excitably as the rest of him. What could he say? Maintaining his peak physical existence hadn't been all bad; leaving Jack with much and more relief that at least he could keep \_something\_ in working condition. Although he groaned aloud at the thought of spending another night with himselfâ€"as if he were some girl who'd grown too persistent and all the excitement of contact had become lost as the repetition grew rusty under familiar techniques, and no one to help expand his horizons.

\_Hell, I'd take a girl right now,\_ a devilishly self-aware smile stood to amuse him for the brief moment, before the substitute could no longer compete with the frustration. Not that relieving himself was some intricate, ball-room dance which required instruction and complex, multi-stepped skills; quiet the opposite, the \_five-knuckle-shuffle \_came as naturally as having a hand, and every boy over the age of eleven had formed the partnership. He knew himself well enough to get where he needed to go, but was beyond bored with cold hands that refused to play fair; only ever interested in the immediacy and nothing emotional whatsoever.

\_Damn that fucking day to hell\_, he recalled the previous mental still frames into focus. \_If only I'd just listened for \_\_\*\*once\*\*\_\_ in my life instead of never letting goâ€"just like I always do.\_ Always \_did\_, the thought corrected itself as Jack unthinkingly repeated it aloud, systematically trying to omit words like "always" and "forever" from his vocabulary. See, always and forever were fuel for the living, but to him they were a prison. They seemed so generous when you were waiting for the inevitable, but they were much too long for someone without an expiration date.

\_ And lucky me,\_ Jack gestured downwardly at himself in a way similar to how Hiccup would've, \_I'm totally non-perishable!\_. The sarcasm came pouring out and yet he was far too frozen to ever grow warm within the heat of laughterâ€"and god did he miss those laughs,his thoughts retracted reflexively towards his friendâ€"those strange, so often sassy or shy smiles that Jack loved so much that sometimes he wanted to punch them right off his face, but always wound up with more creative ways to pull the smile of Hiccup's lips.

However, even in his own mind, the lack of consent made him feel invasive. Probably because everything he \_did\_ was invasiveâ€"even some of his own thoughts must be provoked to be produced,he considered dully to his box of teeth; although the ill-fitting advantage wouldn't replace or remove the mental images he kept carefully hidden away, like flawless centerfolds, tucked between his mattress. The comparison, if nothing else, created a focal point to fix on while dealing with the details as they merged and collided with the result; and for a moment, the advances on himself were almost as innocent as when they'd taken place between more than just the imagery in his brain.

\_This should be illegal\_, Jack considered with moderate guilt when

he'd finally lost the forty-five minute battle with his pants. Jack \_Frost\_? He contemplated humorously, would've been more accurate if they changed it to "Off. \_Although there was something offsetting about the usually routine process; for one thing, invisible or not, he simply undid himself where he'd been sitting underneath a large, snow-swept awning; and thought about how wrong, and yet awkwardly arousing it was at the same time. Then, secondly, he wondered if this was considered necrophilia?"after your body had grown cold in the veins"or perhaps they made exceptions for the living dead.

However, no amount of useless questions regarding his latest "shuffle" would dissuade the substance of the matter, which couldn't simply be ejected. Was it wrong to use his friend as the baseboard to a fantasy he knew he'd never have?

\_Sigh\_, and there went another one of those words again"never." That one was the worst; although he would not sit and tarnish Hiccups memory anymore because of it. Hiccup deserved more than pleasantries, he deserved Jack's genuine respect, regardless of the separation. After god knows how many thousands and thousands of years worth of dictating the ebb and flow of fate"you'd think the simple notion of jarring up a seventeen year old boy's hormones and letting them age would send up a \_huge\_ red flag. Or \_at least\_ the \_decency\_ to consider that it was PROBABLY a bad idea.

But, \_no\_, Jack had been left with the same insatiable curiosities, the same nagging urges"the same \_everything\_"which he would consider himself lucky for if"well, let's not repeat the process"Jack abandoned all trials of testosterone, and left all his day dreams in a nice, single file row"execution stule"almost \_wishing\_ Pitch would claim them. For now"Jack just wanted to be alone"what an ironic slice of denial he'd tried to feed himself with. However, before alone had turned so literal and involuntary"being alone\_ meant Hiccup.

Undoing the latch on the back door"the one that as always loose and catching before it locked"Jack pressed forward softly. Slipping past the rest of the obstacles undetected was easy, and yet he couldn't help himself from pausing to take in all the old, familiar details. This place was once a second home to him, and Jack missed it more than he could manage to express.

Hiccup's room was the hardest to revisit-had it really been so long? At first these secret little visits' had been as routine as breathing, but sooner or later all the oxygen had left the room, and the whole process became suffocating. The same kind of constrictive pressure Jack could feel around his throat as he pulled back the heavy comforter and crawled undetected, along side his friend.

"I missed you today," Jack whispered, curling his feet into his stomach, watching the gentle spurts of air from Hiccup's half-open mouth hit the icy chill of his own and turn to steam. Reaching out, as to brush back a few fallen strands of Auburn, like he had a thousand times before, he'd forgotten himself as the finger lengths fell short of a surface, ghosting straight through his skin. Sighing, Jack curled more closely into what he couldn't touch, pulling the blanket back over the both of them when Hiccup began to shiver, teeth chattering ever so slightly against the proximity between them. "I wish I could be a better friend," he continued, feeling his nose



yesterday!"\_

\_A goofy grin spread across the other's childish features, "I have lots of names," he lied playfully, "all great adventurers do."\_

"\_You're too many things," Hiccup shook his head illogically, even from a young age, he'd been born slightly older than his worth in years. "I'm just me."\_

"\_Borrriinnngggg," Jack stuck his finger towards the back of his throat. "You have to be \_\_\*\*something\*\*\_\_ Hiccup, or else the grownups win!" he insisted.\_

"\_Why?"\_

"\_Duh, because they give us funny names and think that makes us theirs or something," he furrowed his eyebrows with all the self-empowerment of any seven year old, "But I don't WANT to be a Jack," he shook his head disapprovingly, "They come in boxes and pots and lame stuff like that."\_

"\_Haha jackpot," Hiccup laughed to himself, catching the nonsensical drift after a moment. "I don't know though, I think I like my name."\_

"\_Why?" Jack asked strangely, "Do you hiccup a lot or something?"\_

"\_No!" The other boy pouted. "Because it was a present, my dad gave it to me."\_

"\_I guess," the other shrugged, "but I don't know my real dad, so I don't care."\_

\_Hiccup grew hushed in a bashful silence, reaching himself further over the side of the bed, "That's sad," he frowned.\_

"\_Not really," Jack spoke unfazed, as if isolation were always somewhat of a normalcy.\_

"\_We can share my dad if you want," the other piped happily, "he's big enough for both of us I think."\_

"\_Really?" Brown eyes lit up as bright green bounced off them hopefully, "You'd really do that?"\_

"\_Of course," he received a wide, tooth-missing grin, "Everybody belongs somewhere silly."\_

\_Jack reached out smiling, dragging Hiccup off his bed and onto the pillows in a disorganized gesture. "And now I belong with you," he held the other's hand tightly, in a knot of small, sticky fingers.

—

\_Hiccup returned the favor with a hug that overthrew both their balance, landing together in a mess of blankets and laughter, "And you always will."\_

"\_Promise?"\_



"\_Promise."\_

There was a saying about promises, however, and Jack believed it went hand in hand with the word broken, but he hadn't the chance to elaborate before the body next to him lunged forward in cold, sweat.

"Jack!" he yelled, both hands outstretched, eyes half lidded, not yet aware. "Jack!" he shouted again, folding his fingers empty handed, trying to pull symmetry away from the nothingness, only to widen his irises and retract his hands sadly. "Jack?" Hiccup asked again, softly, and almost inaudibly, staring down at the blank spaces of his palms, as his best friend sat not even a foot away, staring awestruck at the blank expression on his face.

"I'm right here," Jack tried futilely, "I'm right here, it was a dream, just a dream," he reached out, hands hesitating every time they got too close, too heartbroken to stand the habitual rejection they'd receive if they went any further.

"I thought maybe it was really you this time," Hiccup breathed in and sighed deeply, running his hands through damp strands that stuck to his forehead, and instilling just the faintest inkling of hope in Jack's chest. "But you were never one for punctuality," his eyes drifted sadly towards the window, and right through the body that lay invisibly at his side.

The tears had come back like little icicles, falling only far enough before forming a sharp, transparent surface that was waiting to break at any moment. Hiccup was looking straight through him, and the thought alone was killing him. "But I'm here now," he pleaded in vain with the silence.

Green eyes were overcast with conflicting emotion, flickering back and forth between angry and vacant as Hiccup kicked off all the covers and walked towards the window that was no completely encased in frost. Rubbing at the pane with the edge of his shirt, he cleared away just enough space to press his forehead against the glass, staring longingly into the endless shades of midnight and starlight. "Why did you have to go," he asked softly.

\*\*-.--.-.-.\*\*

\*\*Reviews pees :)\*\*

## 5. Chapter 5

\_\*\*:) Yay! Chapter Five! Ps; sorry its a little more plot developing than juicy; but you knowwww what's coming next ;)\*\*\_

\_\*\*comment reviews:\*\*\_

\_\*\*baconislpriority: \*\*bahah lol thank you! In my mind Father Time should be a literary badass; and so I simply applied my over analytical, philosophizing brain on lol. That's just the way I think about stuff i guess, I get way too deep lol. But thank you so much! It's truly flattering!\_

**\_\*\*yaoifan101:** **\*\*hahah** OMG (i just wanted to write your name in ALL CAPS right now and couldn't and t was SUPER frustrating!) BUT ANYWAYS; this comment was literally the best thing ever when you were writing it, and i was right next to you waiting to die of laughter when i finally read it. which i did. the first and second time. haha. love you-here's some more bunny for you.\_

**\*\*\_Blizzard Born\_\*\*:** \_aw no! I don't want your heart to break! Don't worry, there'll be some chapters coming up soon to warm it back up! And trust me-we're reading fanfiction-we're already \_punishing ourselves by \_indulging-we may as well enjoy it :D\_

**\*\*\_animefangirl55:** **\_\*\*\_ahhh** ohmygod, making me blush-i guess this is what happens when you waste your whole life writing every waking second like I have seemed to haha i just love it too much to stop. And of course there's gonna be some good feels! I think i'd die too if they didn't! in fact this chapter is leading up to the unfolding of the plot aka YES XD\_

**\_\*\*cold colors:** **\*\*ahh** thank you so much for the review! and also teehee; read the comment above in concerns to what's inshore for this addictively adorable boys lol aka something good is in the near future.  
><em>

**\_\*\*neonlights:** **\*\*woohoo**, reoccurring commenter! that's something i like to see! lol this comment literally said so many nice fucking things that i don't even know which of them to address; but i'm so happy you like my crazy dialogue, because i just style it off how I talk haha so i'm glad it's not super boring. bahah plus i'm crazy and bipolar and really good at flip-flopping back and forth between emotions-who knew it would come in such handy!? and yeah, definitely, i was like AWWW the whole time writing that part.  
><em>

**\*\*EEK;** okay; story time.\*\*\_  
><em>

**\*\*ps:** sorry if it takes a little while for chapter six :/\*\*

**\*\*please** review lol to inspire my efforts of course :D\*\*

**\*\*chapter five.\*\***

"I was going after you." Jack replied sadly, lifting himself slowly off the bed.

"And why did you never come back?" Hiccup continued, quietly to himself, pulling into his own embrace as his arms wrapped insecurely around his shoulders.

A tear slipped slowly down Jack's cheek. "â€|because I died for you."

Labored breaths hit the window, fogging the glass and mixing with the frost. Emerald eyes were flickering faintly against the moonlight, and Hiccup's lips turned downward in a tremble. "All I wanted was for you to stayâ€|" a small fist curled in a failed attempt, trying to transition out of the emotion and into the ignorance of anger.

"And all I wanted was for you to never leave," he interjected.

"â€|why couldn't you just listen for once?"

The thought of Berk burning scoured in chest, charring his stability but emboldening his desire for diction and dynamic. Although technically one sided, Jack and Hiccup were so in sync that the interaction almost seemed real, but the unprovoked necessity to respond eventually rendered the exchange into stagnation, reminding Jack once more that this was make believe.

Hiccup never said another word.

It was so funny how easily silence could break your heartâ€"how easily it could catch every fading word and produce a painful echo in place of meaning. Like invisible rings in a ripple-effect of reverberation, the atmosphere filled with the unspoken, stemming centripetally from the hole in Jack's chest.

He was curled up against the idea of Hiccup, huddled into the impressions of the bed. The other boy had finally gone back to sleep after what seemed like hours that'd he'd spent staring emptily out his window. Perhaps because it had been exactly four and a half hours that they'd sat in awkward, unexplainable synchronization. Ignorance had buckled under temporary bliss though, and Jack couldn't find his feet when he'd tried to run. Instead, he'd held his ground and stayed with Hiccup the whole night, unable to bear the thought of abandoning him ever again.

Continuing to take in the sight of the red head sleeping, Jack wondered how something so beautiful had ever been his. How someone so good and so pure had ever loved someone like him in the first place. The whole thing hurt like hell and the shaken teen had already exhausted himself. Was this really how it was going to be? Is this really all we are now? His lips pulled downward.

The word 'forever' found its way back into Jack's thoughts and left him ever divided as he was reduced to a fraction of what this was costing him. It was as if his feelings had been set to a fixed payment plan, rationing an infeasible debt over the course of a lifetime. Hiccup had been the price he'd paid, but couldn't afford; quickly liquidating his assets existentially, and foreclosing on the future he'd gambled himself out of.

Jack sighed, forgetting how deep the hole he'd dug really was, and just how much debt he was inâ€"debt to fateâ€"debt to Hiccupâ€"debt to himself. It was like he owed something to everyone but found no currency that met the exchange. Unable to reestablish his credit as a friend, or even a human being, Jack was denied every transaction.

The road to hell really is paved with good intentions, isn't it? He asked himself, internally torn by the truth that his attempt to save the thing he treasured most had somehow punished him in the process, and left both of them incomplete. The truth of it was that he'd robbed Hiccup blind, surreptitiously surrounding him long enough to shove the boy's body out of freefall right before stealing his whole world as he sank into the surreal, and became one with the

seafloor.

\_I wish I'd just stayed that way. I wish I'd never woken back up\_ he could think of a hundred ways to say it, turning phrases that couldn't coin the consistency of closure. Hiccup murmured incoherently into his pillow, and Jack knew Stoic would be barging in any second to wake him. The sun had snuck up on them in the dead of night and begun pouring vibrant hues between deep shadowy spectrums and it was once again time for Jack to return where he belonged.

\_Nowhere. \_

Straining himself all the way back to the small enclosure in the forest where he'd carved a world of winter, Jack's thoughts fell fixedly on the finality of his estrangement. There had to be some way to fix it. Reverse it. Cancel it out. There had to be \_something\_ he could do, \_anything\_ to bring the rush of his friend back into his fingertips instead of the fleeting feeling of going right through him.

\_You win old man\_, Jack thought, giving into fate, attempting the first of many tries to solve the riddle his life had been reduced to, and completely unaware how intangibly it was interweaving through his psyche.

Gripping his staff delicately as if it were an instrument, Jack's left hand slid down a few feet before the middle, and pressed his thumb and pointer finger into the smooth, worn away indents. Then, with a steady grip, his right hand traced the woodwork along the curvature, and then all five fingers wrapped around the circumference with a fraction of space between each. Sighing, still nervously awaiting the haunting melody that was a fraction of a second from forming, Jack drew in a calm, cold breath, and held the ice in his lungs for as long as he could before closing his eyes.

Breathing steadily, in and out, he systematically shut down the centers of his brain one by one, allowing them to slip into a false sense of security as his mood melted into soft snowfall. A steady pulsing began to splinter beneath the bark, and the creases and crevices overflowed with crackling frost, filling out the rivets and completing its shape. Bracing himself fearlessly, but still very much afraid, Jack willed his mind to bend quietly out of focus, allowing the pulsation to radiate into his wrists and down his arms.

Shaking his whole frame and morphing in and out of his skeletal structure, staff and boy became one as fractured shards of light began to burn through frost-bitten fingertips, cascading down the crystallized encasing, and melting into intricate swoops and swirls. As steady as his heart, which was hardly beating, the script began to form legibly in small, soft print; but Jack knew it wasn't over yet.

His staff was like his lifeline in a lot of ways, and his connection to it was far stronger than a simple flash of lights; instead Jack clenched his heart muscle together as frequencies of blue and ultraviolet began to burn in their chambers. Folding inwardly against the pressure of his abdomen fighting to hold the force, his entire body slowly turned into brilliant blown glass; standing as motionless as an ice sculpture while an icy, hot whisper thawed his auditory

canals with sharp wit that shrouded double meaning in a barrage of black ice that Jack could avoid no more clearly than he could see.

Slowly, so, excruciatingly slow, each word began to illuminate in a deeper shade of blue as the narration echoed endlessly around him in never ending rhythm, and Jack tried for the first time to really \_listen\_.

\_\_ \_ \_x.-\*-.X.-\*-x\_ \_\_ \_

\_Unable to protect, \_

\_From shallow depths\_

\_A heart rose up\_

\_And fell in farewell\_

\_To the currents and collisions\_

\_Of the body who relives them\_

\_Crash-landing in a forecasting\_

\_Of dizzy-spells made for\_

\_A bad day in hell \_

\_As the seafloor spit cerulean\_

\_And the sea foam starts to swell\_

\_With spinning clouds, \_

\_And crashing waves\_

\_Splintering shipwrecks into graves\_

\_Sinking the secrets\_

\_Withheld from the truth\_

\_Half captain for witnessâ€™\_

\_Half skeleton for proof.\_

\_Going down with the ship, \_

\_Riding an excuseâ€™\_

\_Desperate to detonate\_

\_But can't find the fuse\_

\_An inescapable demise\_

\_Sometimes it's cruel to be kind\_

\_Pumping saltwater up\_

\_Through cracks in the spine\_  
\_Like vertebrae on a string\_  
\_They detach and unwind\_  
\_Like bars on a cage\_  
\_Grown in ruins, built with age\_  
\_There was nothing to protect\_  
\_And nothing to save.\_  
\_So swallow saltâ€\_  
\_The endless burning\_  
\_That cleans the cuts\_  
\_Of deeper learning\_  
\_Then out of seaweed\_  
\_Grow the scars\_  
\_Of disjoining skylines\_  
\_And fading stars\_  
\_Sights on strings \_  
\_Attached to eyes\_  
\_The bodies tied down\_  
\_But the oxygen must rise\_  
\_Up to the surface\_  
\_And out with a gasp\_  
\_Dead hands reach\_  
\_But cannot grasp\_  
\_Fingers slip, \_  
\_Break and crash\_  
\_Against an undertow\_  
\_That runs too fast\_  
\_Dangerously off pace\_  
\_With no chambers to chase\_  
\_A heart continues drowning\_

\_ In search of a face. \_

\_\_ \_ \_X.-\*-.x.-\*-.X\_ \_\_ \_\_

The intonation faded suddenly and the rest stood still, all but imprinting him in the moment. It was only midday, but darkness was surrounding him like a veil, concealing shameful features that failed to understand. Losing sight resultantly, Jack's eyes saw through a filterâ€"black and gauzy, and obstructing the obstacles he otherwise tripped over. Navigating through the poetic verses was like being blind to verbal expression, unable to attribute any deeper meaning to words that seemed so familiar on the surface, but became lost in the lulling of a rhyme scheme.

Slowly but surely, however, the pre-position rendered paralysis and Jack's joints became flexible beneath the softening currents. Flinching at first, his fingers began to twitch like a nervous tick, and then one by one they became mobile as motor skill were instinctively re-instilled.

Prying the digits from the staff they'd frozen to, Jack felt both a sense of relief and discomfort towards the disconnection. On one hand, it was overwhelmingly alleviating to regain a sense of independence; but on the other, it felt strange and somehow unnatural to exist separately.

Staggering backwards in an unfamiliar reaction to control, Jack forgot to take it and collapsed helplessly before he could find his feet. He was exhaustedâ€"

mentally and physically, remembering quiet clearly why this process had never been routine. Jack sighed, struggling to regain a steady flow of oxygen, but found his lungs refusing the unfamiliarity.

"Satisfied?" He breathed labouredly.

The wind blew and the trees swayed, but Father Time did not answer.

Instead a myriad of miraculous molecular structures shook atop trembling tree limbs and sprinkled down over him in a delicate dance. "Well at least have the decency to say \_something\_," he continued, feeling helpless and inadequate and too worn down to face any further rejection; but the sky was still and the earth was silent. Jack was to receive no more than a blanket of snow to bury himself in.

"\_It's called interpretation," Hiccup rolled his eyes.\_

"\_It's called-say-what-you-mean," Jack argued.\_

"\_Because we both know how well you do \_\_\*\*that\*\*\_\_, " several eyes shifted sarcastically.\_

"\_Look who's talking."\_

\_Hiccup didn't rise to the bait. "At least I'm  
\_\_\*\*trying.\*\*\_\_"\_

"\_And maybe I'm sick of trying," the other boy responded stubbornly.

"\_Sick?" Hiccup challenged, closing the space, "Or scared?"\_

\_Terrified.\_ Jack answered, sighing away the still-frame that had turned up to taunt him. Groaning unhappily, Jack turned away from everything, abandoning his quest to break through the barricade, too weak to do it all on his own. Shaking ever so slightly, his foot smacked the ground three times fast, and he waited patiently for a source of balance to emerge.

"Jack?" A soft crunching noise grew closer as Bunny assessed the scenery confused and concerned.

Aqua-marine irises traced a soft symmetry and then spoke inaudibly against it. "I want to see him Asterâ€|"

The statement required no elaboration, and the other caught the meaning without effort. "You mean ya want \_him\_ to see \_you\_," the Australian corrected, not unkindly.

Jack's features fell. "Whyâ€|" he paused. "Why can't he?"

It must've been the wrong question though, because Bunny seemed to pull away from it with no immediate response. The corners of the boy's eyes began to water, understanding this answer was about to rip right through him.

"Because he doesn't believe, Mate." Aster spoke softly, trying to find the right words when he knew they didn't exist.

"In what?"

Bunny's nose wrinkled with the twist of a wince, retracting slightly as he spoke, "â€|in you."

Shattering into a million pieces, Jack wasn't even sure how his heart could possibly still break anymore. "How do Iâ€|how do I make him believe?"

Warm green eyes encased him gently, continuously softening against the unbearable pain of innocence. "Try believin' in \_yourself\_," Aster paused. "Or else how do you expect anyone else to?"

"I wouldn't believe in me either," Jack sighed dejectedly.

"Don't say that," Bunny snapped. "Don't you ever say that."

Staring sideways sheepishly, the youth was sinking into self-deprecating stillness. "Would you rather that I lie?" Jack asked emotionlessly.

"That's enough Jack." Rough pads encased in a surrounding of thick grey and white fur smacked against the right side of the boys face.

Retracing from the collision, several shaken hands rose to the space, holding the pulsating imprint against the palm of his hand as his



eyes framed the shock. Tiny teardrops glistened along the brim of his eyelids, an involuntary reaction that caused Aster to glance uneasily at his open paw. Jack's tone, however, offset any sentiment with hostility.

"What the hell was that for?" he demanded.

"To slap some sense into ya," the elder reprimanded. "I swear sometimes you need a good smack in the head, just to remind you that this is real."

The wording, although ordinary, hit Jack hard and sank into his stomach where it slowly dissolved. "Well it's hard to be realistic when all we do is play pretend," he referenced his guardianship with detest. "What's real about flying around with a magic staff and making winter come to life?" Jack demanded, "Am I Frosty the fucking Snowman?" Eyes narrowed spitefully, "Tell me what part of that sounds real Aster."

"You." The answer came simply, expressed in the most unthinking seriousness that threw the boy off balance. "You're real."

"But I'm not!"

Bunny cut him off, "Not made up, not a ghost, not a pile of snow," he overemphasized on purpose. "You're a person, Jack, not a corpse."

Eyebrows furrowed at the words, eyes squinting simultaneously for some way around them, but Jack fell into a whisper when any retort rotted away, "But I'm dead."

"No, you died," Aster rested his paws on either side of Jack's shoulders, forcing eye contact. "But you're not dead. There's a difference."

Jack had never thought about it that way before, and there was too much truth in the way the tenses compared and contrasted so perfectly. His shoulders slumped under the subtle pressure of the other's hands weighing down upon him with hope and reason, eyes as wide as Easter eggs that were trying to recolor his own.

Sighing, the paws repositioned anatomically and a sad expression encased the youth thoughtfully. "You don't have to say anything if ya don't want to," he spoke calmly, and so much like the fatherly figurehead he so desperately needed. "Just think about it, okay, Jack?"

His head slipped into a forward motion, nodding, but never fully grasping any situational awareness as their second visit wound down even more thought provokingly than the first. It has been less emotional, but somehow more sincere; hitting Jack in all the right places to trigger the inevitability of relapsing into it long after it was over.

The difference between death and deceased seemed absent enough at the time, that is until Bunnymund had taken it deep into the depths of his warren, wrapping such delicate inconsistencies through ought them. Hope was always applicable, it was everything Aster stood for, and nothing that came naturally to Jack; thus interposing in such

brilliant opposition that it created a sense of balance.

Balance is good, Jack allowed himself to admit; balance was everything when you were tiptoeing along hell's boundaries—when one false step could mean life or death. Although Father Time was far from the devil, literally at least, blue eyes rolled back, his domain encompassed all elements of time and space—every dimension that being and perception could contort into.

It felt like a page straight from Paradise Lost, and Jack was constantly changing shape and switching form within the snowfall that rendered him so helplessly to the weight of dirt and debris, whose particles caused cracks in his consistencies to form. He'd fallen from grace and into demonic form, chained to the bottom of a lake, surrounded by fire and endless burning, from which he'd somehow set himself free, only to find that despair followed in his footsteps, flooding into the freefall of factual inaccuracies that forged the borderline between damnation and deliverance.

Water weighs, while matter sinks. Displace the value—the missing link.

That floats above, in drifting shards—but cannot freeze a house of cards.

It struck him suddenly, softly, and with total surprise as the separate stanzas merges into sentence form, and Jack could read them as easy as left to right. Squinting in and out of focus, this time Jack found the unchanging atmosphere offsetting as an internal understanding began to bridge him back into himself, slowly but surely shifting how the world looked through his eyes.

It struck him simply, soundly, and silently how intangible understanding could be, how inferior his feelings were towards the reality of progression; but it had struck him that the water was the pressure that had forced the oxygen from his lungs, deflating the bounciness of his body which sank downward, and the balance of his fate was relocated within a watery grave that froze and fractured into a glass ceiling.

He had broken through though, and the glass had shattered as many times over as his heart, and since it sure as hell wasn't going to stop breaking any time soon; he may as well as accept that there was no way to freeze time from forcing his walls to fall beneath the shifting sands of an unstable foundation. The navigation key for the code to the riddle clearly indicated something was missing—the link in the chain that made it a straight line instead of circular—he was missing—from the world—to his friend—to himself.

Instantly thinking of Aster, the angle in Jack's frown rose obtusely until it had gone more than one hundred and eighty degrees upward into stunning grin, emitting all the confidence of the Jack he must set off in search to find. To be found—it was so simple that it was obvious, and so crazy that it just might work. I can't believe I never thought of it before, he shook his head, maybe Bunny was onto something after all, Jack mused, coining, Smack the Jack as the new and improved whack-o-mole. Smack the Jack to get back on track he grinned to himself, rising to the challenge—the rare occasion to be real again.

What better way to find himself than to seek out the person who knew him best? And what better way to be found than by staging a hunt?

## 6. Chapter 6

\_\*\*Okay! So, seeing as how this chapter was going on like twenty-three pages (which is actually the usual length I try to reach), I split this up into two separate ones instead (seeing as how I've stuck to shorter chapters on this so far). Basically the premise is that each of the next three chapters (mind you i have not completed the last part) is based on a specific memory-or what not. So that's how I decided to break the length down. haha and no, this explanation probably wasn't necessary.\*\*\_

\_\*\*-Also, I would ESPECIALLY appreciate reviews for these, because I was really unsure of them lol. I suppose, unlike usual, I didn't exactly think a full-scale plot over in my head before I started writing. aye. so yeah, reviews keep my sane.\*\*\_

\_\*\*-ANOTHER THING: Okay, sooo; I know that on chapter one, I say something about Review4Review-and now that i'm thinking about it, i probably look like an asshole because I haven't done any because so many people had been telling me not to lol. And then one day I'm thinking to myself like, "Oh good-maybe all those OTHER people wanted reviews, Morgan!" SO.\*\*\_

\_\*\*IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY REVIEW4REVIEW POLICY: please just indicate so in your review :) and i'll do the rest!\*\*\_

\_\*\*-Chapter Five Comment Responses:\*\*\_

\_\*\*BlizzardBorn: \*\*haha the sad part is that \*\*I \*\*didn't even know where I was going with it at that point bahah, this is the only story that I've ever written where I'm really just playing every chapter by ear, and hoping it all segues nicely XD. i'm pretty good and tying everything back in together, so, I'm def. hoping the rest just builds suspense lol \*crosses fingers\* Baha-and who needs SANITY?-haha as shakespeare would say "there is method behind the madness," anddd I for one (being biased and crazy myself) agree with him! haha\_

\_\*\*animefangirl: \*\*well as it turns out, your hijack senses are veerrrryyy accurate! lol and yes, my apologies, i'm one of those stubborn fanfic writers who demands gradual plot development hahah however, this is def. one the most past pace stories I've ever written. aaaaand, as soon as I look over and post chapter seven, you'll only be one away from ALL the moments! \*throws confetti\* yay!\_

\_\*\*neonlights:\*\* lol YES, I still love that you review like every chapter, and that I've come to recognize all your comments, typically turning to my sister and being like "YES, ANOTHER!" And yeah; haha good i'm such a terrible writer, because tbh I don't even REALLY know what i'm gonna do with that whole riddle-the longer portion was just a random poem i wrote months ago that was scarily accurate to this fic-so i was like CONVENIENCE! however, the whole riddle thing will

probably come into play gradually. But the missing body thing wouldn't be a bad idea-I'll make sure to include a special shout out if I end up incorporating that somehow!

><em>

\_\*\*animefreakg: \*\*lol well thank you so much for the review and the support! Oh, yes, and welcome to the fic! Also; yes, I've got the hyperlink for your story that you sent me, and so except that I will be leaving a review shortly after i'm done editing and posting with this!

><em>

\_\*\*.-.-.-.\*\*\_

\_\*\*AHEM.\*\*\_

\*\*\_time for the good stuff \_

><strong>

\*\*\_XD\_\*\*

\*\*.-.-.-.\*\*

\*\*Chapter Six.\*\*

Hiccup stared undecidedly at the frozen pane of glass; it seemed to retain resilience against the heat that had melted all the others into transparencies. There was something different about this one though, something he couldn't quite put into words. Scratching the surface, a slender shaving curled beneath his fingernail as it fell away, and Hiccup flinched when it reformed.

"â€|\_Toothless\_â€|" he called nervously, straining his eyes sideways because he was too afraid of what might happen if he turned away from it.

There was a deep rumbling and a grunt as the dragon uncurled and stretched, slinking over to inspect the commotion.

"Getâ€|get rid of it," Hiccup commanded, although it sounded more like hesitation, causing Toothless to raise one eye higher than the other.

The redhead tapped his foot impatiently, "Just \_do\_ it, okay!" Several hands repositioned, and his ears were met with the low, deep rumbling inside the beast's breast as Toothless conjured a cautious mist of fire.

Across the room, not daring to get any closer, Jack leaned against his staff, watching fire form in sparks like little, smoldering snowflakes, licking at the solid layer of ice. \_It's beautiful\_, Jack remarked. \_ But not quite as strong as what I'm made of\_, he grinned, watching the look that crawled up Hiccup's skin when the glass refused to weep.

Stepping back, then inching forward, and then hesitating once more, the boy arched forward defensively towards the window, as if he expected something to jump right out of it. He couldn't help it though, it was instinctual.

This was unexplainableâ€”abnormalâ€”unnatural.

"It's n-not logically posib-ble," he shook his head, unable to compute, his eyes opening in awe of the crystallization that was causing cracks to echo. It was such a distinct soundâ€”this terrible sort of noise that caused Hiccup to jump back whenever the pressure spread through the windowpane, and then pushed back with a deep, sudden \_pop. \_

It felt as if the whole symmetry should shatter every time, as if Hiccup getting any closer would cause the whole illusion to collapse. Flinching, scattered vibrancies of green seemed to refocus sadly, encasing the phenomenon in its most simple form: \_frost.\_

His expression pulled into his cheek, and his sea green eyes shot towards the floor like doing so would make him forget. However, neither man nor beast were unaware of the painful irony manifesting, and Hiccup delicately traced a "J" into the hissing, crackling sheet of ice.

Immediately, the dragon began to prod his feet excitedly, nudging Hiccup gently, and eyeing the initial.

"Yeah, I know," he sighed, patting the top of Toothless's head dejectedly, "I miss him too bud."

For half a second, Jack's heart skipped a beat and allowed the unchanging consistency to begin melting down slowly, some in rainfall and others in snow. He had left three items fastened in-between the multiple layers of magic iceâ€”each as equally vague as the other, but also unique and specific at the same timeâ€”\_personal.\_

\_Only you'll understand, \_he glanced at his friend, whose Adams apple was bobbing nervously as one foot fell in front of the other. \_Please, Hiccup, \_Jack pleaded, begging the boy's feet to keep going forward, \_you have to \_\_\*\*understand\*\*\_\_â€|you have to go \_\_\*\*back\*\*\_\_â€|\_

Sparkling against the backdrop of light that fought to get through the obstruction of fixed frost, the mass of ice began to give way more rapidly at Jack's command, melting only around the first object as its outlines began to protrude and emerge through the clear, milky currents that ran down the windowsill and pooled on the floor.

Hiccup's entire body drained like an old cartoon, color vanishing from the head down in a heartbeat until the pigmentation in his skin went as white as Jack's, shaking noticeably as both of his hands reached out. First one step, then another, and finally the tips of the redhead's fingers slid through the melting mass, just enough to get a gentle grip around the thick, rounded, diamond shape resting in his palms.

Retracting from the surreal sensation of ice that had not been cold, Hiccup pulled the token straight to his chestâ€”staring at it in complete disbelief. It was a deep, iridescent, obsidian scale no bigger than a fistâ€”it was a dragon scale.

"How did this get here?" Hiccup demanded aloud, eyes beginning to

burn beneath the dampening rims of his lids, as he willed the tears not to fall. "Is this some kind of a sick joke?"

Jack flinched, his eyes widening at the discomfort he knew he had to cause if he ever wanted Hiccup to believe in himâ€"to rediscover him; and the winter reincarnate could think of no better place to start than the one he lost him to. However, Jack was powerless to force the memories upon himâ€"Tooth had made that perfectly clear when he'd gone, begging her for this one, very special favor.

You see, the premise behind Jack's plan had been simpleâ€"crazy, but simpleâ€"it was a journeyâ€"it was an excavationâ€"it was a hunt; and the blue-eyed boy advocated that instead of eggs and candy, Hiccup would be hunting down his own memories.

That's where Tooth came in; Jack had been at a standstill with his own keepsakes of thought and time, but if he could push Hiccup and his into full motion, then the inevitability of inertia would cause them to collide. Once the course of motion had been set, it could not be stopped; and Jack wanted his friend to hit him in a head on collision; he wanted to feel the slam of his heart resuscitating; he wanted to feel the impact of Hiccup's body hit him at full forceâ€"he wanted all of it.

There was a catch thoughâ€"isn't there always? Jack asked in sarcastic echo. Seriously, if the best things in life are in fact free, thenâ€"what exactly \*\*are\*\* the best things in life supposed to be? He considered, then snapped his fingers even more sardonically, Oh right, there aren't any because the world is an asshole, Jack grumbled under his breath, and even death comes with a sales tax.

He had hoped this facet of his plan would fall into place more smoothly; however, Tooth reminded him of the rules and regulations Jack had once again seemed to overlook. See, when he had flown into the heavens of the free floating palace, awed by the radiating iridescent light off the golden inlay, bouncing brilliantly against reflections of the intricate lavender and cherry-blossom stained glass, he'd hoped the Guardian of Memories would have been a little more understanding.

However, Tooth had simply hummed around nervously, fluttering from one diagonal to another, shouting orders, and talking to Jack over her shoulder whenever she could spare the glance.

Originally, his request had been to Hiccup's memories; however that request had been denied, and not even Jack's stunning smile could coax her, or Baby Tooth into letting him borrow themâ€"just for a little while, I told them, he thought back. I would have brought them back when I was done. Although Tooth was buzzing about, insisting it did not matter, and was completely besides the pointâ€"reversing the situation and demanding how Jack would like it if she gave his memories away to anyone who asked.

"But I'm not just \*\*anyone\*\*," he argued systematically, "I'm Jack Frost. I'm a Guardian," he tried next, eager to impress her with at least one of his reasonsâ€"too manic to back down from this idea. He sighed in agitatedly, and released the next four words with much and more emphasis, "I'm his \*\*best-friend\*\*." \_

\_Prismatic, purple eyes widened and drooped in the corners as the constant beating of wings rippled and faded into a steady hover, "Jack, I know this is hard for you to understand, but there are rules, and it's my job to ensure that no one may ever use another's memories against them."\_

"\_But I'm trying to \_\_\*\*help\*\*\_\_ him!" Jack shouted, unable to maintain diplomatic composure under the pressure of his emotions that were hell-bent on finding a way out of this one-size-fits-all catastrophe that had molded itself to his body like a mannequin. \_\_"He's \_\_\*\*miserable\*\*\_\_ Tooth!" The forcefulness in his intonation began to fade slightly under the delicate intricacies of just how important this was. "So tell me, what it is I'm asking that's \_\_\*\*so\*\*\_\_ horrible that you'd rather let him suffer."\_

\_Swooping backward, levitating slightly higher in the air as she elevated and descended in a nervous pattern of sputtering wings and compassionate corneas that encased Jack thoughtfully, Tooth was looking at him the way all the Guardian's did when they developed the inability to deny the boy their assistance that he was so desperately in need of. \_

"\_Please, Jack," she reached out to him, in a sweet, lulling voice that was almost maternal, "You know that I can't break my oath, but please don't think that means I wish any suffering on anyoneâ€¦" She paused, sucking in a breath, and hesitating over the potential hazards this could have. "Tell me what it is you need thoughâ€¦and I'll see what I can do."\_

"\_I just needâ€¦" Jack searched through the word bank in his head to find the right one to fill in the blank. "I just need proof," blue eyes grew big and rounded like a puppy, "I just need him to remember me as I wasâ€¦Iâ€¦" his voice was beginning to catch and falter, rolling the last words off his tongue in a barely audible rhythm, "I need to give him a reason to believe in me again."\_

\_Closing her eyes, ascending rapidly to a large crystal chamber through the ring of peach and amethyst clouds, Tooth vanished from Jack's line of vision, his eyes darting through the shadowy barrier, and his ears perking up for the slightest sound of wings.\_

\_After what seemed like an eternity, or more, Tooth returned with a slender container in her hands that Jack recognized all too well, and he knew they were Hiccup's even if the picture on the side looked like a chipmunk instead of a boy. However, as Jack extended his hand to take the case, Tooth veered into the clear, shaking her head 'no.'\_

"\_You may have three memories," she announced, cradling the teeth in her arms as if they were as precious as a baby, "Any three you want, it doesn't matter."\_

"\_Any three?" Jack asked, already trying to wrap his head around a lifetime and reduce it into a list. \_\_\*\*There's that damn number again\*\*\_\_ he thought restlessly, although it gave Jack the cleverest of ideas, drawing back on the 'deeper meaning of three' with a smirk on his face. Creation, destruction, and preservation: The perfect recipe. \_

"\_Any three." Her head bobbed in confirmation, "But I must warn you

Jack, this won't work as well as you're going to want it toâ€”there's a big catch when using extracted memory," her higher-pitch was muddled between forewarning and the slender, jet black vial between her fingers, as she watched it hesitatingly. "You will have no control over when the memory triggers or which segment or scene will come to their mindsâ€”memory is not simply \_\_\*\*in\*\*\_\_ the mind Jack, it is an essence of your being," Tooth drifted downward in a 'Z' shape, sighing to herself as she continuedâ€”|\_

"\_Aside from the preservation in our primary teeth, memory is nothing you can touch Jack, it isn't located \_\_\*\*anywhere\*\*\_\_, " she explained calmly. "You must be prepared for what else you may provoke in the process; all frames of mind will become subject to apply as soon as you take this vial; however, you cannot leave any written or explicit directions. No arrows, no pathways, no secret codes," she squinted at him with a skeptical eye, knowing his way around everything was impeccable. "Instead, you must find something solid, something linked directly to that which you wish them to seek, and you must help them relive the moment in order for them to remember..."\_

\_The list went onâ€”|and...onâ€”|.and..onâ€”|\_

\_Jack's pinkie finger was in his ear, twisting from side to side as if to clear the clutter and confusion of the instruction, "Jesus, that's a lot of rules." His eyes seemed to begin spiraling in circles. "Do I really have to follow every, last, ity, bity, teenie, tiny, one?" \_

\_He was bearing a toothy, childlike grin, but the fairy merely gave him a gentle smile. "It depends how badly you want your friend backâ€”|."\_

The question had practically been blasphemous, but Jack hadn't a single bone in his body that was mean enough to lash out and follow through with it; instead, he'd taken the vial, had the instructions all repeated, and then blubbered like a baby, thanking Tooth left and right as he took flight.

Over five hours had passed between that time and now though, and Jack had long since taken the steps to grind the memory molds into a fine, powder; combining it with snow and several locks of hair, both his own and Hiccup's (which had taken him awhile to acquire might he add), before stirring the concoction into a thick, milky residue. After allowing the liquid to set, the mixture congealed and completely solidified into the shape of a tooth, which he'd been saving until now.

Sighing deeply, Jack slipped his hand into his back pocket to retrieve the vial, hearing the almost inaudible \_clank-clank\_ of the canine-capsule shifting about aimlessly inside. Undoing the cork with his teeth, spitting it somewhere off to the side and unnoticed, his lips repositioned around the rim of the slender tube, and tipped it all the way back until he felt something small and cold hit the back of his throat. Inhaling through his nose as not to choke, Jack steadied his gag reflex and then allowed his muscles to force the unusual shape through his esophagus and into his stomach where it may dissolve.

According to The Tooth Fairy, the combination should allow the memories to exist within Jack's subconscious; and although he would



have no direct access to them, he \_would\_ experience them vicariously, as well as interpose them once their owner had drawn them out. She had tried her hardest to advise against this particular methodology, but Jack wasn't having Hiccup relive anything that he wasn't going to relive too. \_We have to do this \_\_\*\*together.\*\*\_

Concentrating once more on the distraught mess of arms and legs pacing around the room, Jack refocused his efforts towards his friend, who was staring down the scale as if he'd seen a ghost. As if he suddenly recognized it. Rubbing it between his hands, the white haired boy watched Hiccup's palms slide smoothly around its surface, caressing it delicately as if to warm an old friend from the cold. Then, sighing in deeply, Jack braced himself for Hiccup to establish the connection between one of the three memories he'd stolen. \_Starting with 'destruction,'\_ Jack watched closely, holding every fallen feature in his heart so he could remember them all when he was finally able to apologize to Hiccup's face for making him relive the disfiguration.

"Do you recognize this buddy?" Hiccup held out the scale for Toothless to flare his nostrils at, taking in the scent. "It's one of yours," he continued, clearly half mad with the idea that the scale his best-friend had taken with him to the grave had somehow appeared imbedded in a box of ice, frozen to the inside of his window. "It's the one Ja-," his lips froze, hesitating openly before closing, unable to even bear saying the name as the cogs in his mind fell flawlessly in sync, and it all came back to him for the first time.

Hiccup hesitated towards the dragon with the scale trembling in his grasp, holding it out in front of him blindly as if this were pin the tale on the donkey, but emerald eyes forced themselves from closing. Shallowly, his heart was pounding as he aligned the scale with the deep notch in the dragon's back, the empty space where one had been missing for years.

There was a smooth sound of surface against surface and Hiccup dropped it immediately when it was a perfect fit, his hand rising suddenly to cover his mouth as the name, "\_Jackâ€|"\_" escaped in a rushed, frantic spurt of air.

In that moment, Jack wanted nothing more than to wrap his arms around the traumatized teenager and pull him into his chest, never letting go for the rest of their lives; but, instead, he felt a sharp jolt in his ribs that popped his chest forward painfully. \_Oh my god.\_ Jack cringed inwardly in pain, doubling over, clenching the space on his chest where his heart was. Across the room, Hiccup's motions seemed to mirror his friends, unknowingly now connected through mind and body as the potion Jack brewed made this both direct and vicarious.

Swelling in his solar plexus like a surge of storms tearing through the sea, Jack could feel his stomach rock unsteadily, while the sands overturned the scale deep within his subconscious, spitting back out a brilliant flash of blue that sucked them both beneath an undertow of long-since revisited remembrances.

\_Hiccup was caught between a bursting clash of cobalt currents charged with electricity, and Jack was grinding his heals into the

back of his dragon as hard as he could to make it go faster. The legendary beast was even more colossal in the sky, swallowing the horizon in a tattered expansion of bone-like wings, all jaunty and dilapidated. Another eruption of electricity shot past Jack, barely missing him by the skin on his nose as it zoomed past and dematerialized into the night, followed by its brothers and sisters, as they shot through the sky in every conceivable direction.

—

\_Holding his breath deep in his lungs, he was trying just as hard as Hiccup to even breathe, as hurricane force winds spun the clouds into a mixture of smoke and burning, fracturing bright shards of crimson and cerulean throughout the sky that fell against the reflection of the tide like fading fireworks. Several brown eyes were wide with fear and terror, all at the same time, as he searched the endless intertwining wisps of death and darkness for even the slightest symmetry of Toothless shifting throughout them. Suddenly, there was a scolding, puff of steam encasing him from the back, and Jack turned around to the sound of screaming. \_

"\_Hiccup!" He yelled back, his vocals tearing through the smog, and choking against the simple effort to breathe as he was blinded by a volcanic eruption that began furiously framing the wingspan surrounding them like a ring of fire.\_

"\_Jack!" he heard back, at least he thought he did, some sort of muffled sound that resembled his name; but when Jack veered his dragon jerkily from left to right, upward and downward, he saw nothing, not until an uncontrollable burst of wind began to pull him and the rest of the sky downward, falling towards their deaths.

—

\_Beating, thumping, skipping, and palpitating, Jack had never felt so small, or so alarmed in his entire life; and yet Hiccup was the only thing he could think of, attempting the descent with his dragon headfirst in hyper speed. \_

"\_Jack!"\_

\_His head jerked in every direction, attempting to pinpoint where the echo had ricochet off of, but this time the cry was real—the pain in the voice was real—the whole world was burning now, and Hiccup was going down with it. Finally securing the site of Toothless spiraling tail-lessly, Jack's brown eyes became larger, and began filling with tears from his heart and from the suffocating atmosphere, trying to track the image of Hiccup spiraling, almost lifelessly. His body was curled into his dragon, only held in place by a frayed stretch of rope that secured to his vest.\_

"\_Hiccup hold on!" he screamed, following, and following, digging his heels into the dragon so hard that Jack could hardly see, searching and searching for the body falling in and out of focus—so focused on everything else—so focused—going so fast—"\_

\_that—\_\*\*WHACK. \*\*\_Something large, leathery, and smoldering smacked him from behind, as simple, sound, and sudden as a knife driving through his back, and then Jack felt his body slip from anything stable, plummeting into petrifying freefall. \_

\_Fluttering his eyelashes, Jack squinted around at the sights and sounds that zoomed in and out of focus so fast that he was certain he was already dead. That is until he had caught sight of Hiccup somewhere below, slipping slowly from his restraint, and hovering above the mass of the dragon that fell even faster beneath him.

\_

\_With his heart in his throat, and his stomach falling through his body, Jack's pulse shot off in an alarming acceleration, pounding against his chest so hard that he thought it must be the sound of drums on the island, signaling for search parties.\_

"\_Hiccup!" He screamed, but his voice was cut off by the cruel, hundred and hour mile vortex of wind whipping past him that stole his voice. Panicking to the point of total clarity, Jack hardly had enough time to think, but he saw the ground beneath them approaching, and Hiccup was heading straight for high water. Closing his eyes, almost without any thought at all, the brown haired boy fell forward into a dive, increasing his speed as his hands cut through the resistance. \_

\_Staring upward from the back and forth rotation of motion and gravity ripping his body in directionless jolts, several emerald eyes were staring up hopelessly, trying so hard to embrace his eminent death, but couldn't quell the faith in that voice he'd heard. In that brilliant, beautiful sound he'd heard crashing through the chaos so clearly. That instant where the world had gone quiet, and time had stopped, and he'd launched his attack into the belly of the beast without fear. In spite of the reality, the sound was always fading, resurfacing, and then resonating, but Hiccup had not seen a faceâ€|and now he was falling, falling ever so fastâ€|and the only thing he found himself wishingâ€|is that he didn't have to die alone.\_

\_Forming profusely, every ounce of tears was ripped savagely away from his overcast, emerald eyes, never steadfast as the wind tore them upward, and scattered the salty solution in droplets that quickly fell out of form. There was no stopping them though, because he swore he could hear Jack calling, and he wanted so badly just to see his face one last time. But the air pressure was fading, and pressing down on in lungs, and he was losing the ability to breathe in the drastic drops. \_

\_Fluttering open and closed, Jack watched Hiccup's consciousness fading and tried anything he could to fall faster, angling himself every way, and even trying to flap both arms frantically as if he had wings. "Hiccup, I'm right here!" The sound sputtered and died out through the distance, but the brunette couldn't stop swimming closer, and closer until the body freefalling soundlessly collided with the brush of his fingertips.\_

\_Flexing and curling tightly around the air, Jack couldn't find anything to grasp onto, but he could see the ground approaching at record speed. All but giving up when, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed Toothlessâ€|twisting and fighting furiously to fly on his own, back to his master, straining to extend his wings, but falling shortâ€|which was the moment something sank in Jack's chest, and he realized he was never coming home.\_

\_Pushing forward so peacefully, yet so terrified, he put his every

last ounce of strength into grabbing at Hiccup's vest, this time enough to pull to boy's body into his own. He tried to hold them back, but the salty serum still formed and fell upward into the sky as Jack wrapped his arms around Hiccup so tightly that for a moment, he thought they would both die like that together—but then there was a weak movement against his chest where the other boy's head had been tucked beneath Jack's chin protectively. Several skinny hands fought to the front of the brunette's shirt, digging into the fabric as if he had claws instead of fingers, staring at his face with such wide-eyed horror, "I told you not to come," his voice trembled, still shaking against the other. \_

"\_I know," Jack tried to yell, taking another glimpse below, realizing there was no time. "But this time it's you who can't come with me," his lips broke into a wobbly smile that couldn't suppress the tears. \_

\_The fists around his shirt clenched even more tightly. "What are you talking about Jack, don't let me go," he resisted frantically when the taller boy began to pry Hiccup's fingers from his chest, holding them in his own tightly. \_

\_Jack cracked a smile, and all he said was, "I'll miss you," in-between tears before thrusting the other boy forward, who reached out in vain.\_

"\_No!" Hiccup was hysterical, screaming and fighting off the Toothless's attempts to protect and shelter him from the crash. All the boy could do was shout, "Jack!" at the top of his lungs, and then pound his fists against Toothless—sobbing and begging to please, —\*\*please\*\*— save his friend.\_

\_Grunting in distress, the dragon surveyed the area long enough to catch the silhouette of Jack slipping through the clouds, and got just close enough that Hiccup reached out and caught his arm. Although the impact nearly knocked them both back into the air, the small, skinny teen was using everything he had left to pull Jack's body to safety; and Jack had one hand clenched around one of the dragon's scales, his heart filling with hope for half a second, until he felt himself slipping. And Jack knew once and for all he was a dead man. \_

\_With one hand around his friend, for what would be the end of their forever, Jack removed his hand from Hiccup's first, despite the others resistance. "Jack," he shouted, screamed, and even cried hysterically, "Please, what are you doing?!" \_

\_But the extra weight was veering them all off course, and Jack knew he was tipping the balance. With another tear in his eye, his lips quivered uncontrollably as he pressed a kiss into his fingertips, gently covering Hiccup's mouth with them. "You stay," his voice cracked, quoting one of their favorite movies, choking on the tears. "I go," Jack stretched outward, taking back his hand from Hiccup's face that failed to grasp anything but pain and silence. "No, following," Jack shook his head, his intonation catching and shuddering as he felt the scale begin to slip out of place. \_

\_The last thing Jack saw was the fading, fleeting blink of green before his body smacked the surface and broke the waves, watching air bubbles rise as he continued to sink. At the same time, his friend

fought and clawed against his dragon, who wrapped him securely in his wingspan, bracing Hiccup for the fall from the sky that he wouldn't remember.\_

\*\*\_.\_.\_.\_.\_\*\*\_  
><em>

\*\*Okay! THREE THINGS.\*\*

\*\*1. \*\*\*\*Reviews, duh. lol && thankyou,loveyou!\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*2. \*\*\*\*\*The main flashback in this chapter, is the second half of the scene in chapter one!\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*3. If you would like me to do the 'review 4 review' for your story,\*\*

\*\* INDICATE THIS IN YOUR REVIEW, PLEASE!\*\*

\*\*also: message me if you have a specific story you'd like me to look at.\*\*

\*\*Alrighty. On to the next one...\*\*

## 7. Chapter 7

\*\*\_Meh, well I realized that this half isn't really as long as I thought on its own-but oh well; I think two new chapters is better than one really long, incomplete chapter that takes me weeks to finish/post. teehee. so yes.\_\*\*

\*\*\_Keep in mind: I have NOT finished the 'third memory' aka chapter 8, so sorry for that lol.\_\*\*

\*\*\_And, as always, pretty, pretty please review so I know this hasn't gone to complete shit. haha. and with that being said, i'll also just point out that I'm writing this as I go, like i've mentioned to a few of you, so have mercy on my shitty lack of planning :)\_\*\*

\*\*\_shanks!\_\*\*

\*\*\_.\_.\_.\_.\_\_\*\*

\*\*\_Chapter Seven.\_\*\*

Shivering, something that he was not accustomed to, the fast forward footage that had been projecting through both of their eyes flickered and the scenes that once bent to fit the walls fell away in pixels. And all Jack could do was walk straightforward, approaching the boy on the bed who was bawling uncontrollably, and throw his arms around him—despite the fact that truly, he was only hugging himself.

"I didn't know—" Hiccup shook, with his face buried in his arms, and the scale pressed so tightly in his fist that his fingers were turning white, "—I never knew—"

The sobs were coming in clearly, but the speech was all muffled, and Jack had never wanted something to be over so badly.

"I neverâ€¦rememberedâ€¦after my fall," the boy's body rose upward, his sleeves circling his eyes like washrags, "I never remembered it beforeâ€¦" Hiccup's voice trailed away, caught in a bout of crying that Jack would walk a million miles to stop the sound of; but even sitting right next him, the other boy still couldn't see him, and would never know the difference.

Sighing inwardly, deeply, and burdened, Jack slid off the bed slowly, slipping over towards the window. He now knew what Tooth had meant when she warned him of the risk he'd taken by ingesting extracted memories, understanding that it not only allowed him harbor those memories of Hiccup's, but also bled his own fragments of fated remembrance into them as well.

Consequently, it was almost too cruel and unusual that, even now, after they had become apart of one another's thoughts, that neither could communicate with the other, or even sense the proximity that Jack was not doing well establishing; but the pale teen couldn't get close enough to the empty space. Even going right through someone had felt better than falling through himself, reliving the moment where he cascaded from the clouds of ash and smoke, and sunk one thousand, nine hundred, and thirty-six feet below sea level.

However, whenever the sequence would flash like a flip book of freeze frames throughout his endless nightmares, all he could remember was the falling and the crashing, and the going coldâ€¦\_but I never paid such close attention to the final moments I spent with himâ€¦\_Jack frownedâ€¦\_those never came up in the dreamsâ€¦\_he breathed labordly, feeling tears that he wanted to cry more profusely when they froze and denied him the chance, unable to escape the imagery of fading out beneath Hiccup's terrified, almost childlike fear.

He had gone into that battle as a man, and Jack had chased him down as if he were an infant, forcing him to stare the death of his friend in the face, and leaving Hiccup so broken that suddenly Jack found himself thinking perhaps he had received too merciful a death.

\_A lot of people say drowning's not so bad, \_icy blue auras closed, trying to imagine it once more, \_all the writers and the poets,\_ Jack thought calmly, breathing in and out slowly before holding his breath, \_they say if you just ease into the water, that it will take you in its arms, blanketing you in warm, waves that will rock you to sleep for all eternityâ€¦\_Inhaling deeply through his nose to replenish his air source, Jack sat up, and shook his head.

If truth be told, he didn't really remember dying; just hitting the water and sinking beneath it; however, the second half to his own toothed memory had been more than enough for Jack, and he couldn't ever stand the thought of seeing more fire. Hiccup, on the other hand, was still laying flat against his bed, stroking the scale thoughtfully in his fingers.

"Where did you come from?" he turned it around thoughtfully, like a stone or a coin between his fingers. "Because I know where you should be," he stared at the once sunken scale that was evidently warped and smoothed over by the restless beating of currents, "and there'sâ€¦just no way it's really you."

His freckles seemed to go out like the little lights on North's

globe, so fast that it was taking so much out of Jack, twisting him up because there wasn't a damn thing he could do about it.

"Butâ€¦"

Hiccup continued speaking, pausing, hesitating, and glancing around the roomâ€”suddenly uneasy. Jack's overly observant eyes latched onto the rotations of deep, green eyes searching through the emptiness for some symmetry to fold in and out of the shadows, and stood on the edge of his toes.

"If you're out thereâ€¦\_god\_," Hiccup stared at the ceiling, wiping his eyes, "this is so stupid," he reprimanded himself, scolding the stupid idealistic boy inside of him that he couldn't seem to kill. His eyebrows seemed to furrow towards the barely visible \_J\_ within the frost, which was now streaking and refreezing, and his eyes appeared to ask \_he's never coming back, is he?\_ It must have been \_something\_ about him at least, Jack deduced, when the smaller boy closed his eyes, steadying himself, and speaking quietly.

"But if that's really you Jackâ€¦.Iâ€¦I don't know \_how\_â€¦.or whyâ€¦.butâ€¦." small, slim shoulders began to shake violently, "but I \_really\_ miss you," he blurted out, and for a split second when Jack laid his phantom fingers over the boy's shoulderâ€”the redhead jumped.

Sucking in a sharp breath, Jack's hand retracted in sheer fear, clenching it tightly in his other fist as if to protect it from the one thing he'd been just dying for, for the past three years. It was sharp, sudden, and slightly electrifyingâ€”scaring the crap out of Jack, but jumpstarting his heart to a hundred and eighty beats per minute as Hiccup's whole body seemed to stiffen and plank.

Sitting rigidly, reaching one hand slowly up his chest, and to the empty space where he'd sworn he'd just felt someone else's, the look on Hiccup's face made him look like he was about to get sick. Hyperventilating ever so slightly, he breathed in and out as best he could, but Jack was selfishly fixed with the focus that they were \_this\_ much closerâ€”immediately returning to his frozen vault against the window, raising his staff horizontally, and giving off a very specific flip of the wrist.

\_Drip. Drip. Driiip. Driiiiip. Drip. \_

Hiccup's head shot up in the same direction as Jack's body, and just the idea was exciting him, but the emotional and psychological hell he had put, and was continuing to put, Hiccup through hollowed his eyes a little more when the smaller boy lashed out, falling to his knees, frantically trying to sponge up the water on the floor, repeating, "No, please, no, more. No more. \_Please\_."

It was too late though, and Jack had three total memories and three total phases; all of which must be completed. \_I'm sorry\_, he whispered, frowning at the distress, but turning his eyes in the opposite direction. \_I picked this next one special thoughâ€¦\_ Jack trailed off in a blush, burning as red as fire against the pale, pearly skin it was melting the words away from.

"I'm not all bad," Jack sniffled, but grinning under the shyness of

context, "This should make you smile" the sound of his voice dwindled down once more, as nervously as Hiccup when he'd spoke aloud. "This is where we started" us."

Slipping away in thick sheets this time, as momentum gave way to gravity, instead of melting off in raindrops into puddles, a handful of wooden shavings fell out from within the deep imprints of snow, completely soft and dry; followed by the sound of smoothed over stones slipping onto the floor, one at a time, like cubes out of an ice tray, sliding all over the ground.

Hiccup paused, still on his knees, pressing a drenched rag against the wetness that he couldn't absorb, when he noted a small, shiny gray pebble bouncing beneath his fingers. Although similar in shape and texture to the scale, the weight of this object displaced the negative value of the object in his hand, and his chest became a quarter of a pound lighter, but his eyes still lingered uneasily around the room; searching "seeing" knowing "but never finding.

Sighing, he leaned backward, stretching his arms behind himself and propping his body against his palms. "Jack?" he tried again, squinting his eyes, then peaking a second after saying it, trying to glance around for any sudden movement or shifts in light. However he neither felt nor saw a thing.

Although as he tossed a pebble up and down in his grasp, Hiccup considered the single fact that he'd been wrong about seeing Jack once before he'd not remembered his fall from the ascending, air born hell three years ago, all he could remember was waking up with a wooden leg.

"So maybe this is kind of like that time" the auburn youth murmured aloud to himself, holding his face in thought, glancing around with his eyebrows furrowed, knowing this whole idea was folly and childish.

Even though he underwent no further out of body contact, nor did he receive any sort of response for this farce of fate he'd been assigned to comply with, Hiccup tossed one of those smooth stones in the air and caught it with a tight, firm grip after thinking the objects over for a while. After turning the wood shavings over in his palms and sprinkling them across the ground from his fist, however, sight and touch were not enough to identify with this time.

With his hands in his pockets, choosing to float behind rather than follow in his footsteps, Jack drifted along next to Hiccup who had spend over three hours alone in his bedroom, pondering over the obscure objects, before finally chancing to lean close enough to the shreds of soft, tree bark to catch their scent. It was a peculiar aroma, something so subtle, but so distinct that you could never forget it.

Walking through the snow blanketed trails and crude, man-made pathways that wound endlessly through the \_Forgotten Forest\_, Jack spun his staff overhead, summoning the downpour of little, fluffy flurries to lighten the mood surrounding them. \_I suppose this is why they don't schedule any sort of 'hunt' in the wintertime,\_ Jack glanced around from the equally pathetic display of his abandoned friend and himself wandering disoriented, and heart broken through



the forest in the dead of night, \_because everything is dark, and bleak, and so fucking depressing,\_ Jack shook his head, accidentally transforming a few flurries into a full on snow shower. \_I guess it can't be helped,\_ the boy sighed, continuing to levitate alongside Hiccup's strong and steady strides through the snow, admiring the boy's sense of direction and determination.

It made him feel good insideâ€”like somebody still cared. Like \_Hiccup\_ still cared, that he wanted to believe. Jack smiled, staring down at the boy's freckled face from a birds eye view, taking in the sight as familiarly as breathing, savoring the sweet breath of life he felt filling his lungs. \_He really does want to see me,\_ his chest swelled, continuing to watch Hiccup with invasively observant blue eyes, as reflections of crystallized snow danced romantically in his gaze, and Jack couldn't help but slip into the mood of this next memory.

Stopping outside a narrow enclosure, where the trees parted in the middle of the woods to give way to a clearing, they both paused in the center of the entryway, taking deep breaths in preparation, and Jack noticed the fist at Hiccup's side, curling small fingers into the spaces where his shoulder should be. \_He's scared,\_ the pallor boy realized softly, stepping up next to the trembling figure, who had never quite stopped shaking, and folded his fingers through Hiccup's invisibly.

\_THUMP.\_ The space in Jack's chest jumpstarted again, and for another fraction of the second, the feeling beneath his fingers was flesh on flesh, undergoing the sensation of small, frantic fingertips grabbing on tightly. Not tight enough to keep Jack from materializing back into thin air, but enough to squeeze the next memory reel into motion, narrowing his thoughts down to one idea and one idea only: the way Jack Frost felt pressed up against himâ€”|

\_It was an usually warm day, without a cloud in the sky, or even an overbearing sun to overshadow the loveliness with extreme highs and lows; instead the day was absolutely perfect in every consideration, and Jack and Hiccup had wandered far from home again, into the outskirts of the world they could call their own. \_

\_Pushing back the branches to the clearing no one but them knew about, Jack held back the thick boughs of the Smoke-Pine-Tree, creating an opening for Hiccup to duck through. \_

"\_Thanks," the green eyed boy smiled as Jack released his grip, wafting the scent of matches and pine softly through the air, a smell that had become kind of like home to them after these past few months. \_

\_Catching up to the few feet the smaller boy had distanced himself, Jack made sure to stay in sync with his strides, not falling behind or ahead, staying nowhere but his side. It had been months since their last squabble, since the night Jack had pushed his friend up against the back of his own house and kissed him longer than he'd ever kissed any girl in his life. Yes, it had been enough time to ease the tension and create such new fun in its place; complicating everything between them into a series of awkwardly crossed boundaries and unspoken words, but Jack couldn't even help it anymore.

\_

\_Stopping next to the stream, Hiccup knelt down to test the water, leisurely dipping a set of small, slender fingers beneath the surface, sinking down to the bottom to trace over the curvatures of the smooth, flawless stones that lined the bottom as soft as any sand. Unaware that he was being watched, or that Jack had followed him to the edge, Hiccup felt his back sticking to someone's chest when he tried pushing himself back to his feet.\_

\_Instantaneously, the smaller boy's stomach burst into a fit of knots, feeling Jack's chin rest against his shoulder, looking down at the handful of pebbles Hiccup knew he had no interest in, and snaking his hand under the auburn haired boy's arm, fingering through the gray, black, and orange colored rocks. \_

"\_These are pretty good ones," Jack remarked, tracing each rock delicately, brushing the palm of the other's hand beneath his fingertips on purpose, and ever so slightly. \_

"\_What's the occasion this time?" Hiccup asked evenly, his heart beat against his chest, but he remained objective rather than inferior, finding Jack to be dominating that role otherwise. \_

\_Inhaling slowly, the scent of fires from the forge mixed with spicy, cinnamon, and the brunette's face inclined inward to draw a deeper breath. "Why should I need a reason to want to be near you?"

\_

"\_Because," the smaller boy elbowed Jack's gut, just enough to release himself and regain control of his personal space. "You tend to have the most \_\_\*\*bizarre\*\*\_\_ compulsions," he smiled sweetly, but slanted his eyes knowingly. \_

\_This was Jack's favorite side of Hiccup though, the side that wasn't quiet advanced, but not quiet nearly innocent—the side that threw punches instead of empty headed stares—the side of Hiccup that he could always count on to make him do something crazy. Or stupid. Or both. \_

"\_Speaking of bizarre compulsions," the mimicry rolled off Jack's tongue with the just the right amount of sway, matching the motions of his arms as they pulled his shirt up and overhead, "Remember how you said you'd teach me how to swim?"\_

"\_Oh yeah—the teaching lessons on Saturday—the \_\_\*\*love it\*\*\_\_," Hiccup's eyes rolled sarcastically, but slipping upwards and over the lean, but surprisingly muscular stomach exposed in front of him.\_

\_Jack stepped closer, reaching up adorably to scratch the lock hair behind his ear, "Aw, please? You promised me y'know?"\_

\_The other sighed, "I know, I know."\_

\_Slender fingers found their way around the rim of a small, green shirt, "Well then let's go-go-go," Jack grinned, beginning to lift it just enough to tease.\_

"\_Stop it!" Hiccup's confidence fell into a flustering fit, never quiet able to outgrow his self-esteem complex as he shoved down his shirt, making sure no skin showed at all.\_

"\_It's only me," the other boy whispered, fingers still holding the edge of his shirt, but not forcing it any direction.\_

"\_Exactly," emerald eyes emphasized, the bridge of his nose burning red.\_

\_\_\*\*Oh god, don't do that to me\*\*\_\_, Jack groaned inwardly, but it was so adorable that his fingers furrowed more tightly, leaning forward into such a strained tension that held between them. Narrowing his deep, chocolate brown eyes in on the stunning green spectrum, Jack's teeth parted in a sexy smirk, delicately nipping the other's nose with in a soft, affectionate sort of frustration. "I guess you never know what I'll do next," he grinned, red in the face, but not the least embarrassed.\_

"\_Which is why I can't take you seriously," the other boy's voice pulled away, with more sentiment than he meant, but redder than he had been five minutes ago.\_

"\_Well you should," the taller boy spoke quietly, in that even sincere sort of tone that sent shivers up the Hiccup's spine, "because I want you; seriously."\_

\_Hiccups mouth opened, then shut, then opened again, until gluing itself back together angrily, "It's not funny Jack," his eyes averted, "C'mon, don't do this to me."\_

"\_Why not?" the brunette encircled him halfway, swaying from side to side.\_

"\_Becauseâ€". "\_

"\_What?\_"

"\_Because Iâ€". "\_

"\_Because you don't like it?" Jack guessed outwardly, not in the mood for games, and always too easily offended at any sign of a slight.\_

"\_No," Hiccup spoke out, drawing out the sound of his voice over the other boy forcefully, shoving Jack's hands away, "Because I \_\_\*\*do\*\*\_\_ like itâ€|" but the words were so rushed that he was left staring at them as soon as they'd left his mouth; ever conflicted by the trails his eyes were drawing around the word bubble as well as the steady rising and falling of a toned chest standing way to close to his own. \_

\_Taken briefly aback, Jack took a literal step backward, then forward once more, "Then why are you asking me to stop?" he coaxed, pulling Hiccup along by his shirt ends, closer, and closer to the water.\_

\_The boy's mouth trembled, "Because you're \_\_\*\*you\*\*\_\_ Jack."\_

"\_What's that supposed to mean?\_"

"\_That I'm \_\_\*\*me\*\*\_\_," the other looked downward, somewhere off towards the ground. \_

\_Now Jack's anger was escalating, "And what is \_\_\*\*that\*\*\_\_ supposed to mean?" he demanded, taking a step forward and causing the other to take one back.\_

"\_I'm just, I'm allâ€"\_\_\*\*this\*\*\_\_, " Hiccup gestured hurriedly up and down himself, rushing through the gesture as if it were somehow making everything worse. "And you're allâ€"allâ€"that," green eyes died out in a sigh, tracing the pattern downward unintentionally from the nape of Jack's neck, across the curvature of his chest, and even lower.\_

"\_Yeah?" Jack asked angrily, taking another step forward, "Well maybe I \_\_\*\*want\*\*\_\_ all of this," he impersonated the same gesture.\_

\_The other swallowed, growing nervous, feeling flushed, and constantly pulling at the bottom of his shirt. "Stop gesturing to all of me," he complained, feeling his freckles burning beneath the deepening spectrums of scarlet across his skin.\_

"\_No," Jack shook his head stubbornly, brown locks swaying from side to side as he refused to take his eyes off the boy in front of him. "Because I \_\_\*\*want \*\*\_\_all of you," he stepped forward again, just barely seventeen and too audacious for his own good.\_

\_Stepping backward in a miscalculation of space, Hiccup's foot caught the edge of the pond, slipping involuntarily on the instability of slick mud and shallow rooted grass, tumbling back on his butt with a splash. But as soon as he recovered himself, Jack was already closing in and coming after him.\_

\_The looks on his friend's face were merciless, making Hiccup so red in the face that he honestly thought he may die of embarrassment. The pant legs of Jack's khakis grew heavy, and began to weigh down with water, turning a darker grayish color, and sticking to his legs whenever he took another step. Walking forward until he was kneeling downward, and his whole lower body was submerged, sitting in front of Hiccup with the most serious expression.\_

\_Catching in his throat, several green eyes grew wide, and the boy's back pressed up against the other side of the shallow shoreline. "Don't tease me," he stared downward, avoiding eye contact, but never failing to encircle Jack's abdomen, unintentionally or not.\_

\_Gently leaning forward, pressing his hands on either side of Hiccup's body, sinking his fingers into the smooth stones, he curled his joints underneath them and leaned forward, "Is that what you think I'm doing?" he asked softly. \_

"\_It's what you \_\_\*\*always\*\*\_\_ do," Hiccup snapped. "You never take anything seriously, then you," his hand began to rise in dramatic, incomplete gestures, "then you do some shit like this, and expect me toâ€"."\_

\_Jack's lips aligned with the words, parting Hiccup's mouth slowly, and sliding the length of his tongue along the soft, sweet surface, tilting his head to the side, and then pulling away with the sound of a gentle, kiss. "Shut up," Jack whispered, reaching one hand forward, and pulling Hiccup's tinted face in closer. "Just \_\_\*\*shut up\*\*\_\_, " he breathed on the edges of his lips, teasing them open with his just

enough as he crawled closer, with his knees on either side of Hiccup, resting against the other boy's slender hips. \_

\_Hiccup squirmed, but didn't resist, releasing a deep breath, and bringing his fingers to his lips, covering them as if it could take it all back. "But we can'tâ€|"\_

"\_But we are," Jack mewed, sliding his hands along Hiccup's legs, hooking all his fingers under the soaked, fabric of the shirt that was sticking suggestively to his frame, exposing the small protruding hipbones where it had ridden up.\_

\_A small groan emitted the smaller boy, both hands automatically covering the other's, still self-conscious and hesitant; but he didn't have the heart to be laughed at. "\_\_\*\*Don't\*\*\_\_ Jack," he spoke ineffectually, losing his eyes in the other's pooling gaze, his heart threatening to palpitate right out of his chest. "Just don't."\_

\_Slim, slippery hands slid up underneath the fabric anyways, each digit creasing along the smooth curves and indentations of the lean, naturally toned surface; so opposite of anything he'd ever formed attractions over, but it was entrancing him beyond disregard. \_

"\_I don't \_\_\*\*care\*\*\_\_ that you're skinny okay," he pinned nervous hands at their sides. "I told you, I want \_\_\*\*this\*\*\_\_, " brown eyes looked him up and down, "\_\_\*\*all \*\*\_\_of this."\_

\_Flinching at the straightforward, unflinching repetition of responses, Hiccup stared into the unflinching sincerity across from him, losing his voice under the embarrassment. "But you could have anyone," he sighed, unable to concentrate with such a perfect creature pressing down on him, "\_\_\*\*Anyone\*\*\_\_â€|"\_

\_Jack cracked a side smile, repositioning their hands until their palms were mirroring, folding their fingers in-between the empty spaces, and squeezing them securely. "Anyone isn't you, Hiccup," he was grinning bashfully, burning up, but leaning closer, pressing his lips gently on and off, "And that's all I want."\_

\_Hiccup's hands held onto Jack's. "But \_\_\*\*why\*\*\_\_?" he asked, angling his eyes upward in this expansive, innocent stare that brown eyes were immediately fixed on. \_

"\_You're my best friend." The sentence slipped out so easily, Jack's eyes narrowing in, unable to disconnect, watching the slow rise and fall of Hiccup's chest, and tracing it up the nape of his neck until he froze. The other boy had closed the space, wrapping his arms around the brunette's neck as Jack stared back, resting his forehead against Hiccup's with a soft smile, "It was always an occupational hazard."\_

\*\*\_.\_.\_.\_\*\*\_  
><em>

\*\*You know the drill :]\*\*

\_\*\*Okay, so yet again I've produced another chapter that I just sat down and somewhat forced myself to write, but then fell into the flow of steadily though oughtâ€"so I apologize if it's a little short as well, and straying from the format of the other two memories. However; I sort of fell in love with the simplicity, and the back and forth interweaving. ANYWHO. I'm working on the follow up as we speak, but let me know what you thinkâ€"because I realize now that I should have probably just waited to post them all together, but ohwell! Too late now lol.\*\*\_

\_\*\*-comment reviews-\*\*\_

\_\*\*animefangirl55: \*comment number one\* \*\*\_\_OKAY, sooo, def. don't know if I've ever felt so bad before in my life for writing insanely depressing story excerpts! Like oh my god, I was staring at the screen like OH NO! DON'T CRY! IT ALL GETS BETTER I PROMISE! \*rushes to post the next chapter, full of fluffy, wonderfulness\* lol!\_

\_\*\*\*comment number two\*: \*\*\_\_OH JEBUS; perhaps the longest, most happy-making comment I've received so far, simply because of how much time you put into writing all of that, and how amazingly wonderful it boosted my confidence to continue. So thank you for assuring me that those chapters werne't total shit (haha cause you might not think the same of this oneâ€"aye..\*becomes increasingly nervous\* â€|.anyways, I will make sure to look at your stories! Sorry if it takes me a little bitâ€"only because I'm terrible with punctuality and such lol, BUT I always keep my word!\_

\_\*\*Goddess-chan123: \*\*\_\_hello! Thank you for the review, it's always good to see new faces leaving some feedback. Also; did I mention how in love I fell with the fact you drew parallels to the whole 'teeth' theme throughout it? Because I absolutely did in every consideration! Lol hopefully I can continue to satisfy the sweet tooth soon :D\_

\_\*\*Neonlights: \*\*\_\_Ah! No! Another reader who I have emotionally scared! Damn itâ€"you guys think all those scenes and flashbacks are hard!? Try reading all these comments, pouring their hearts back out and telling me how miserable I'm making them! Ahh, I swear, Jack and I are going through similar sad feels every time! Lol also, gracias for the props with the whole Tooth/memories thingâ€"I was afraid I didn't end up incorporating it quite the way I envisioned it. But, anywho, hope you like this next chapter, and also that you know the good vibes will be coming in before you know it!\_

\_\*\*Animefreakg:\*\*\_ Yes! Those are definitely some short and sweet words that I like to hear! (especially since I've come to think that I crashland out of these so called rolls more so than staying in motion with them) So it is so comforting, and reassuring that I've still got this in the bag! Aye, hopefully chapter nine can continue to prove this as well once I finish perfecting it!\_

\_\*\*-.-.-.\*\*\_

\_\*\*Okayz. Please go easy on me.\*\*\_

\_\*\*I know its different.\*\*\_

\_\*\*But as of now, I really am sort of in love with  
it.\*\*\_

\_\*\*\*crosses fingers and hopes this is reciprocated\*\*\*\_

\_\*\*oh yesh; and reviews please; like I'm always yapping  
about\*\*\_

\_\*\*:)\*\*\_

\_\*\*-.-.-.-\*\*\_

It was a strange memory to come back from, and even stranger to re-live. Like being put back together after years of falling apart. Sighing steadily, Jack breathed in the past seventeen, allowing the memories to dance delicately around him like intricate snowflakes. Each one floated amidst the other in a gentle, yet blundering gust; creating nothing, but white space. In Hiccup's hand was a slender blue flower with a stem as pale as snow, whose petals were kissed with frost, and bright blue eyes were clenched tightly, both nervous and excited.

As reality remained frozen, just a little longer, the crystallized stars floated about freely, and Jack's skies were overcast with both an omniscient and obsolete downpour. They had been torn apart and then pieced back together, they had lost one another and then tried desperately to findâ€”and now they were standing several feet away, and were left with merely seconds.

Jack's breath caught in his throat, knowing that this was the final phaseâ€”the final memoryâ€”the final moment to everything he had ever hoped forâ€”but only Hiccup could determine the direction of their fate now.

The green-eyed boy had received the first and second phases ideally, and passed the routine examination with flying the colorsâ€”the first had been meant to destroy, and the second to resurrect, but now it was up to the third to maintain. However, Jack had not known what it meant when his friend turned towards the shoreline instead of the forestâ€”where he should have returned to the enclosureâ€”

Confusedly, Jack watched each unique consistency create a different series of images, until one calmly drifted onto the bridge of his nose, where it dissolved immediately. The flower was an unusual breedâ€”unlike any other that grew anywhere else in the worldâ€”and the exact same one Jack had given him the day before he died. It was supposed to be unmistakable.

He felt an icy chill as the droplet traced down along his cheek to his chin, and found himself searching desperately to regain the warmth. Inching closer and closer to the body between the frosted force field keeping them apart, Jack once again took hold of the hand he couldn't feel, and refused to let go.

This particular memory was as steadfast and fleeting as the snowâ€”equal in intricacy and inimitabilityâ€”without the scientific accuracy or predictability, he had no warning. Hiccup took a sharp turn instead of going straight, and the scenery that slipped into

still frames around them formed in the last way Jack ever expected them toâ€|

\_Bellsâ€|they were tolling, echoing endlessly through the air in such an eminent series of chimesâ€|bellsâ€|but Jack couldn't remember ever hearing such a soundâ€|and suddenly he found that this memory never belonged to himâ€|\_

\_Instead his body hovered overhead, levitating lifelessly, confusedly in the snowfall as he stared down at a circle of faces he once knew so well. Everyone was thereâ€|Hiccup, Stoic, Gobber, Astrid, Fishlegs, Ruffnut & Tuffnut, and even Snotlout. \_\_\*\*No, \*\*\_\_his head shook frantically, \_\_\*\*no this isn't right, this wasn't supposed to be what you thought of...\*\*\_\_he cringed, and \_\_the most terrible trembling took hold of his body as he watched a casket descending deep into the earth, creaking and lowering to the rhythm of bellsâ€|bellsâ€|such an eerie soundâ€|\_

Hiccup pushed back the thick, tree limbs leading to a fissure in the forest, just before the shoreline on the other side of a steep cliffâ€|the shore they could both hear breaking and crashing against the jagged, compilation of rocks.

"\_Loss is not an easy thing to understand," Hiccup began, his voice already beginning to swell in his chest. "It isn't something you can see, or touchâ€|but it is a part of you. A piece of you-," his lips trembled, "that you find you can no longer feel." All five fingers folded tightly around the perforated edges of notebook paper, "It's the moment when you can feel the rest slipping, the moment you know in your gut that you can't hold on, but you fight it anyways, hoping somehow to reach out and grab it..."\_

Sinking slowly against the smooth slanting surface of a large bolder, Hiccup allowed himself to slide along until his feet hit the first ledge, and continued downward in a similar series of motions. The shallow pond in the middle of the scenery sat still and frozenâ€|the wind creaking indiscernibly through the trees. He hadn't made a sound since leaving the clearingâ€|since retracing his footsteps back to his room where he'd faced the frozen vault head on, and pried away at its falling form before Jack could even allow it to melt.

Clawing and hacking like his fingertips had been ice picks, Hiccup broke through the surface and chipped away all the frost, leaving jagged, indentations in place of the smooth, flawless finish. Breathing in slowlyâ€|so slowly that Jack thought he'd gone madâ€|the boy labored tirelessly until all that was left between him at the third object was a glassy, film-like layer of ice that shattered beneath his touch. Falling down to the ground with such an ear shattering sound, yet hitting the floor beneath them as softly as snowflakesâ€|Hiccup had hardly appeared to hear it. Instead, he reached forth confidently, wrapping each shivering finger delicately around the stem, and left his room before a single, solitary thought could form.

Like he knew exactly what he had to do.

\_Jack could feel his stomach echo hollowly, desperately trying to produce a beat that refused to resuscitate, and as he peered down at all the unsure faces exchanging hesitant glancesâ€|he knew for the first time what it truly felt like to feel absolutely



nothingâ€|bellsâ€|so many bellsâ€|\_

Back amidst the unturned underbrush of his own secret garden, Hiccup had hardly taken the time to realize he hadn't revisited this place in longer then he could rememberâ€"but none of it seemed to matter. And Jack floated behind, following reluctantly, but terrified as they flashed in and out of the memory involuntarily, and disconnected.

"â€|\_When I realized Jack was goneâ€|" the statement seemed to paralyze him, "that's what it felt likeâ€"like some part of me was missing, and I couldn't find it, no matter how hard I looked. I couldn't believe itâ€"\_\_\*\*refused\*\*\_\_ to believe it," his eyes turned sharply to the ground, "and I know I might never understandâ€"but it will never take away from the hole that's been left in all of our heartsâ€|" \_

Hiccup walked slowly, secretively, and as if he knew more than ever he was being followed, until he stopped in front of a crude headstone, in which he'd carved the epitaph himself.

\_Stopping briefly, the gazes pooling around him in desperate concern were not met; instead, Hiccup breathed in and out deeply, as if to force the tears at bay long enough for him to finish.\_

Jack's eyes rounded sadly, not ever expecting fourteen, ordinary words from a famous writer to fill him with the most excruciating pain he had ever known

â€|\_bellsâ€|all he could hear were bellsâ€|.\_

"I'd never heard anything describe you so perfectly," Hiccup seemed to turn in Jack's direction, still glancing for something that was never there. "You never cared much for the book, but you were Gatsby if there ever was one," Hiccup smiled, in that sad sort of way that suppressed all the rest from falling out.

"â€|\_That's the worst thing about loss I think," he offered, "that it's irreplaceable. There wont ever be another Jackâ€"nobody who can ever hope to restore his vitality, or the hopefulness he filled us withâ€|" \_

" 'So we beat on, boats against the current," Hiccup's lips parted slowly, wetting them with his tongue when they instantly cracked and became dry, "borne back ceaselessly into the past.'"

"â€| \_There won't ever be another smile that shines quite as bright, or a person capable of having quite as much fun as he could; no, Jack was one of a kindâ€|" \_

Jack sidestepped into Hiccup, blinking almost in and out of strobe light scintillations of past and present freeze-frames fracturing their motions into disjoining seconds, and tried once more to grab onto his hand. Flashing through the sound of bells and shallow breathing he felt the pressure of someone else, somewhere out of body, bypassing between the beating tintinnabulations that were constantly tearing him away as Hiccup removed his hand.

\_Bellsâ€|such low, aching, echoingâ€| bellsâ€|. tollingâ€| softlyâ€|.

tollingâ€| alwaysâ€| bellsâ€|for himâ€|tollingâ€|\_

Kneeling, Hiccup rested his forehead against the gravestone he'd erected himself in the silence of the realm he'd once found a dragon in, squeezing his hand around the side of it, as if to draw from its unwavering stability. Clenching his eyelids together tightly, he released the flower from within his almost suffocating grasp, and allowed it to float, almost feather-like, down onto the snow-covered earth without a sound.

"Please," Hiccup whispered, pushing himself to his feet, both emerald eyes still hidden behind his eyelids, as his heart was overwhelmed with the chambers of anotherâ€beating almost so rhythmically that he swore he could hear the sound of bells. "\_Please\_, Jack," he repeated, and expanded, inching towards the emptiness that was looping endlessly in cycles that were far from lifeless.

"â€|\_Unlike anything, or anyone I've ever knownâ€|And if he were here," a faint smile cracked behind the unerring composureâ€|\_

"If you're \_really\_ here," Hiccup breathed against the air, bracing himself with one arm gently extending, his fingers set into a trembling fist that began to uncurl as hesitantly as his eyes, shooting through the pitch black moonlight like the green light at the end of the dockâ€disappearing in and out of sight.

"â€|\_You know that he'd be the first to crack a joke instead of sob storyâ€the first person to tell you everything will be alright before you have the chance to realize it wontâ€" \_

\_Please, please, please,\_ Jack bounced nervously, his eyes chasing the unpredictable flashbulbs around him that were snapping his neck in every direction they were cast, pushing him backward terrified, and dissolving everything into colored dots.

"\_And he would be the only one to tell you that nothing truly goes away until you stop believing in it."\_

The vibrancy continued to vanish every time he blinked, and the image in front of Hiccup became an inconsistent blur of light and shadows. Reality streaked colorlessly with every heartbeat, and his eyes remained closed, "Then let me see you," he concentrated hard, pressing his lids down into tears, as Jack stepped backward and held his breath.

â€|\_bellsâ€|bellsâ€|bellsbellsbellsbellsbellsbellsâ€|.the sound kept getting faster, and faster, ripping through his hair and around his body indiscernibly as his heart beat in unison, faster, and, faster, and faster  
stillâ€|bells\*\*beat\*\*bells\*\*beat\*\*bells\*\*beat\*\*bells\*\*beat\*\*â€|..and Jack could hardly grasp any sense of awareness as he'd become completely metaphysical, forcing his way forward, his motions fracturing as he morphed in and out of eyesight, and discolored spotlights splintered him into a flipbook\_.

His arms and legs felt just as choppy as the disjoining freeze-frames that leapt from shadow to shadow. \_Pleasepleaseplease,\_ Jack sputtered a spastic, but constant rhythm that slurred the sound together after repeating it indecipherably in his head, squinting and straining his eyes to see through stormy strobes as the disorienting

shades flashed and flooded in constant motions. "Hiccup," he spoke outwardly, but the sound seemed to bounce back at him, devoid of an echo as the sound was neither transferred nor received.

"\_And I don't think it's possible anyways," Hiccup continued, pulling a flower from inside his jacket absentmindedly, running his fingers along the petals, "to ever stop believing in something you loveâ€|"\_"

"I never meant to," Hiccup pleaded, his fingers flinching back inward, as they reopened as slowly as the first flowers of spring waiting to break through the frost. He had hardly allowed himself to breathe, sucking in a sigh as his tears fell, distraught and heartbroken against the emptiness that refused to form in their place.

"I know," Jack whispered back this time, feeling unexplainably weak, as the bells tolled onward, and took something back with them that he couldn't quiet place, but his heart dropped. Realizing he wasn't sure if he had one at all, clenching the space on his breast as he backed up even farther into the wall, unnerved as he noticed a pair of unmoving, emerald eyes glued to his silhouette.

"\_Because I think that it's a part of youâ€|"\_"

There was a pitter-patter that outpaced the palpitations in Hiccup's chest, and he stepped forward fast enough to see a blinking blue orb shoot across the rocks in a streak of unchallenged, white light.

\_All along, he'd had enough time to see it coming, and exactly enough after to avoid a casualty; but gave into inaction instead, and chose to close his eyes. Jack lost all sense of direction, and then he lost direct control; but what he would never know was made it so effortless to get lost in the lightâ€|"\_"

Staring directly into the unfaltering green auras that peered, hopefully through endless darkness, Jack started crying against his own control, and his heart chased the biggest space in front of him that he could fix into a focal point, and tried to run until he became its shadow. But he couldn't move.

â€|\_.tollingâ€|bellsâ€|beatingâ€|ceasingâ€|bellsâ€|breathâ€|breathingâ€|.ceasingâ€|the last soundâ€|.the only soundâ€|.bellsâ€|the worst soundâ€|"\_"

Hiccup choked, but the weight in his chest was a mix of too many emotions, and he felt an undeniable presenceâ€|"an unexplainable connectionâ€|"as his eyes began eclipsing with the faded symmetry, outlined in the curves and crevasses of the cavern. "Jack, I still believe," the sound of his voice kissed the staggered breathing of his best friend's ghost unknowingly, and several green eyes closed once more, rendering Jack to the darkness.

"\_Just like Jack will always be apart of all of us," Hiccup offered as the tears slipped slowly from each eyelid, tracing his cheeks, and slowly weighing down the petals as they cascaded in unstoppable streamsâ€|"\_"

And amidst the darkness that danced indistinguishably in his eyes that were overcast with petrifying paralysis, Jack closed them calmly, and forced himself to embrace his only fear—the fear of life—the fear of living—the fear that brought back the possibility of death—and then he craned his neck forward blindly, and Hiccup's hand extended, moving forward magnetically, as he almost flinched away from it.

"—Just like he'll always be a part of me. My best-friend," he sniffled, no longer fearing the future quite as he had before, "Forever and always."—

Lowering his forehead, Jack breathed in slowly, weightlessly, and so intertwined within the entity across from him; withdrawing hesitantly, before stepping forward and resting it gently against the palm of Hiccup's hand in the most simple gesture of trust—

—The whole world froze—

—Time stood still.

—And space broke into a million pieces—

—Feeling was faint.

—Oxygen was scarce—.

—But Jack was breathing—.

## 9. Chapter 9

—\*\*HOKAY; so; we're down to the good stuff. Finally right? Sorry it took a whole'nother chapter, originally it should have gone along with the third memory, but for whatever reason I was just staring at my word processor like duh-dur-dur-durrrr, completely unable to connect the ideas and turn them into scenes. BLECK. However, I must admit it has worked INCREDIBLY in all of our favors; because instead I've produced about thirteen pages of deliciousness.\*\*—

—\*\*Anyyywhoo;\*\*—

—\*\*Comment reviews.\*\*—

—\*\*oh PS: for anyone who didn't get what the hell i was talking about between the split sequences in the last chapter; i briefly explain in the first comment review to Cold Colors!\*\*—

—\*\*-.-.-.\*\*—

—\*\*Cold Colors: \*\*\_\_lol well, if your confusion is referring to the awkward back and forth between bells and funeral eulogies; then I shall clarify by explaining all the bells and such is supposed to be illusory to Jack re-experiencing LITERALLY being dead—something that would have been out of body and never formed in memory—so it intertwines with subtle elements of the funeral that came from Hiccup's memory instead—as well as transposing with the sensation of Hiccup's ever increasing belief pulling him back into

lifeâ€|.yeahâ€|hah really inferable right? Not confusing at all haha, I realize now I should have probably explained this earlier. If that WASN'T what you were confused about, I apologize for this long-winded, unnecessary explanation. And oh yes, they will be seeing eachotherâ€|riiiiight aboooouuuttttâ€|NOW\_

\_\*\*Rahar Moonfire: \*\*\_\_thanks so much for taking the time to write out a review! And welcome to the never ending madness that is my writing, lol. And no worried, I was pretty much brand new when I started this; I was just sitting around talking to my sister, who told me about it, and I said something really stupid about wisdom teeth lol and thennnn turned it into a horrible titled fanfic XD ah. But thank you, I'm glad I haven't butchered it so far!\_

\_\*\*Animefreakg: \*\*\_\_yes, yes, yesâ€"sorry, I am just continuously in love with people who appreciate all the cliffhangers, because half the time I live by them; and am too obsessed with suspense and unanswered questions to end conclusively all the time. Eek. But this is very good feedback; I know now that my format of back and forth confusinness actually worked the way I wanted it to! Yessss. Lol now please enjoy this shamefully wonderful chapter on me :D\_

\_\*\*Animefangirl55: \*\*\_\_haha oh my god, I swear you always leave be the lengthiest, most energetic reviews, and I haven't stopped smiling everytime I read them since you started posting them so consistently. Ahhh. So thank, you thank, you! And, no, no I LOVE YOU, for actually READING this and ENJOYING it lol. Hopefully however you have sustained enough oxygen until nowâ€"because the good feels are hereâ€"starting up with a nice even mixture of satisfaction and plot development. Teehee the best kind of tension. \*throws confetti in celebration for the start of HiJack moments\*\_

\_\*\*Chibiterasu:\*\*\_\_ Thank you for the review! And as I said to another of the newer faces; welcome one and all to my ridiculous little fanfic lol! Get ready to probably hate me for cliffhangers and refusing to get straight down to happy endings lol. But oh wait, BONUS POINTSâ€"because you too noted the cliffhanger, whether it was in detest or admiration bahahâ€"but I do love the recognition of my cliffhangers. Because I'm so unexplainably I love with them. Bahah and I totally laughed when I read that you ditched the prospect of studying in order to read all thisâ€"because this is preeetty much what I'm doing with my life while I'm taking the semester off of schoolâ€"fanfiction trumps all other subjects! It has been proven! And also; great timing on dropping in on this story; because here would be that lovely continuation!\_

\_-.--.-.\_

\_\*\*HOPE EVERYBODY ENJOYS.\*\*\_

\_\*\*(and leaves morgan lots of beautimus reviews that she so shamelessly requests, unfailingly, in every post).\*\*\_

\_\*\*I'm thinkin' this chapter deserves a little recognition though;\*\*\_

\_\*\*I kept all of you, and your fanfiction cravings, in mind as I wrote it\*\*\_

\_\*\*Aka: its not totally analytical, symbolism crap that I'd usually write lol.\*\*\_

\_\*\*Teehee.\*\*\_

\_\*\*GOOD!\*\*\_

\_\*\*This chapter makes me so excited I can't even stfu and stop typing.\*\*\_

\_\*\*Eek; okay. Here we go.\*\*\_

\_\*\*FOR REAL THIS TIME.\*\*\_

\_\*\*-.-.-\*\*\_

\*\*Chapter Nine.\*\*

Bells faded, and steady breathing took their place. Eyes refocused, and then were metâ€|It was the sweetest, swiftest form of contact, and Jack withdrew, almost disbelievingly, when he could feel every second of it.

Overwhelmed, unsure, and ultimately terrifiedâ€|Hiccup stood across from him unchallenged, but unable to speak. His lips formed words, but produced no soundâ€|Jack stepped forward, and the other stood motionless. It was an ungodly silence that seemed to last for hours, swallowing them into a sea of subliminal thought and dream-like motionâ€|even the slightest movements felt unreal, and neither of them could breathe.

Everything became nothing; and nothing became everything

And for a second, Jack forgot all about the falling and the fracturing. He forgot about endless echoes and future complications; he forgot everything for a moment. He wasn't nervous, in truth, but for some reason he felt incredibly shy. It was unusual, but there was something stirring about it, something that made Jack forget himself; and he could see it in Hiccup's face for the first time in three years.

The redhead readjusted his eyes, and Jack saw his reflection go in and out of focus. It felt like he was looking at something that wasn't there before, something he wasn't sure he recognized, and Jack could feel Hiccup's deep, viridian eyes begin to dig deeper, pulling him under, as the silence caught in the pallor boy's throat.

"Your hairâ€|" Hiccup spoke softly, several fingers reaching forward to frame ghost like strands between them; searching inconsistently to find something recognizable as he breathed in every feature unclearly at first. Gently caressing the locks, Hiccup let them fall as his palm flattened, framing the side of Jack's face as it slid down the smooth, surface of his skin and held his cheek."â€|And your eyes," he continued to take in the detail, "they're blue," Hiccup tipped his head to the side, focusing in on the intricate irises of aquamarine and ice that alternated in rings; allowing his fingers to trace the skin around the other's eyelids ever so slightly. "It's really youâ€|" his eyes assessed calmly, falling back in love with every second glance as he juxtaposed the appearance between past and

present.

Jack's eyes drew closed reflexively, pulling his face into the unfamiliar presence, burrowing ever so slightly against the other's hand, and then embraced the overwhelming electricity in his heart. In tune with each other even in the absence of communication, Hiccup continued to explore, with his freehand falling back against Jack's hair, running his fingers gently through the soft, discoloration, pushing loose strands out of his face.

"Please say something," Hiccup pleaded, and the words were met with the unavoidable swelling of salt, unsettling as it sank through his eyes, and fell through the space between them. However, Jack was too concentrated on the contact, too wrapped up in over three years worth of empty spaces to even fathom the formulation of words; instead his eyes remained closed, and his usually strong, but now shaking hands moved to cover Hiccup's gently, aligning, and pressing his fingers along the identical spaces.

"Jack, please..." The tone grew more frantic, forcing the tears not to flood too far into his voice as the eyes across from his reopened to meet his gaze, pooling into Hiccup's eyes with such a delicate intensity.

"I don't know what to say," Jack admitted, almost inaudibly, losing the sound of his voice, and drowning through the tears scintillating in soft, emerald eyesâ€"feeling the touch and go electricity of Hiccup's palms repositioning against his face and through his hair. "I've waited so long" he laughed at his own stupidity, "â€|and I have no idea what to say."

Both of them inched forward hesitantly, as unsure as their nearly paralyzed limbs, irrefutably withdrawing back to the inability of knowing exactly how, or where, to pick back up after so much time had passed them by. They'd been leading separate livesâ€"living in separate worldsâ€"and even all that time had not been nearly enough to resolve the tension of conflicting emotions.

So many things were swelling his Jack's chest, and it was equivalent to experiencing every, single emotion simultaneouslyâ€"within a ten second time frame of uncontrollable happenstance. It was one of those instances where it feels like you're listening to a song that used to remind you of someone else, and the whole time it's playing your face gets hot and your stomach tenses, because all you can think about is what would happen if it played when you were with them.

Overanalyzing every lyric, debating to yourself if every last parallel is accurate, and whether or not the parts that aren't will offend or mislead that person as a resultâ€"all the while knowing none of the above matters when the subtext is so mutually obvious. But then Jack just stood there and Hiccup left it aloneâ€"like they both knew how hard this was for the otherâ€"like the chorus had repeated for the third time in a row already, and the song was almost over, but they were both reading too far into it to change the track.

And it \_was\_â€"so painfully obvious, in both of their eyes, as the tension diffused between the exchanging of frequencies. The unspoken words were paralyzing them within the pre-position of something they

could never have planned for. Even when all the meanings were implied, neither of them could bring themselves to speak any further; and now both of them were exhausted.

Hiccup was watching himâ€”concentrating and refocusing on every detailâ€”like the song had started spontaneously playing again, and Jack knew he had to face the musicâ€”had to move in sync with the rhythmâ€”had to drown all over again.

It was so funny how that worked, how, ever since the first timeâ€”he'd been drowning. Drowning in the inconsistenciesâ€”drowning in the advancingâ€”drowning in himselfâ€”and it was rendering both of them mercilessly to the disconnected memories. To the fragments of here and now that only fate could hope to explain.

\_ Do something\_, Jack hissed inwardly, \_say something you moron. \_But he couldn't, every syllable caught in his throat, and Hiccup was swallowing every word he wasn't saying. His eyes were so wideâ€”so terrifiedâ€”so entrancedâ€”\_so goddamn beautiful,\_ Jack sighed in frustration, wondering how he could dream of something for so long and then stare at it silently, succumbing to the fact he was a complete idiot. \_You're supposed to be dead,\_ Jack reminded himself, shifting obliviously, uncomfortably, and extrinsically between the space; pouring his eyes into the pocket of air separating them. \_Hiccup is probably losing his shitâ€”\_\*\*say\*\*\_ somethingâ€”\_\*\*anything\*\*\_. \_

But still, there was nothing.

\_Still\_, they stood, staring, anchored in anatomic positions, almost statuesque as the staccato vibrations of their disjoining breathing slipped subliminally into a soundtrackâ€”to that one song you fear more than anything to shareâ€”to the electrifying isolation of another's wordsâ€”to the perfect procreation of thought that was so accurate they felt like your own.

His lips opened, formed to fit the words, but the silence was intimidating, and Jack was scared. For so long he had fought this, the exposureâ€”for so long he'd refused to feel anything at all, because it was always easier then admitting he couldn't. However, Jack had lost sight of his confidence against the contrast of who they were and who they used to be. Both of them had changed, and the unanswerable questions as to why were restrainingâ€”the lack of familiarity, suffocatingâ€”and the posttraumatic stress of a past life was literally breaking Jack's heart.

Seeing Hiccup had melted something softly in the pit of his stomach, but Jack had forgotten how to swallow anything that wasn't frozenâ€”anything that wasn't solid; instead, the fluid motion was unnerving and overextendingâ€”both upsetting and exhausting all the boy's efforts. He wanted to cryâ€”he wanted to screamâ€”he wanted to wrap his arms around Hiccup and reverse the time they'd lostâ€”back to when they were still spinning on the same axis.

Breathing in and out slowly in unavoidably audible spurts, Jack's lungs filled the air like smokeâ€”tangible but transitory as it melted against Hiccup's half open mouth, and then dissolved before either could cut through it.

"Jack," he whispered, flooding forest green into his



irisesâ€"offsetting rings of emerald as they clouded, unable to understand. Unable to distinguish between what was real, and what wasn't.

Jack's eye contact remained unbroken, but he didn't breathe a single sound. Swallowing dryly, staring so fixedly, the tension rose so thickly into the air.

Like a scene in a movie, they'd been drawn out twenty minutes too long; and instead of a climax, they were given background musicâ€"lost within the never-ending cacophony of alternate meaning that refused to leave Jack alone. It was a song he'd heard a hundred-thousand times, they were the words he knew by heart, and the rhythm that beat his thoughts back to Hiccup every timeâ€"to the best friend he'd ever known, the most beautiful mess of red-brown hair and too many freckles that stood across from him in senseless tears and confusion.

There was just no way for him to emit the right emotions though, and this hurt Jack more than Hiccup would ever know. They were dancing on a drawbridge, and it was hard to find their footing at first; and even harder still as darkness shrouded every inch of the atmosphere, flooding the dull illumination of moonlight around them indistinguishably.

"\_It's a funny thingâ€"isn't it?" \_an absent echo rolled around his auditory canals, \_"to come back from the dead?" \_Father Time's voice encircled him, \_"So strange how we forget ourselves."\_

It were as if the words were provoked by Jack's lack there ofâ€"as if to mock his silenceâ€"but the sound churned on caustically without reply. \_"A man with strings cannot stand alone, Jack; you must decide if yours are an attachment, or a part of you. If you may remove them, or if you were always meant to wear themâ€"Detach, Jack," \_Father Time instructed, more softly, as he withdrew. \_"â€"let goâ€"and give inâ€"" \_It all sounded so simple. \_"Because he wont wait foreverâ€"you're running out of timeâ€"the rest is catching upâ€"\_"\_

Jack was hardly listening anymore though, closing his eyes carefully, with his back pressed against the ravine. The shiver was involuntary, but suddenly the distance was perfect, and Jack swore he'd never been more attracted to the uncertain feeling he got when the words fell away like white noise, and were replaced by a haunting melody ghosting over his skin.

"Iâ€"I thought this is what you wanted," Hiccup's voiced withdrew hesitantly, almost as quickly and unconfidently as when it sounded.

But Jack's subconscious was projecting like a speaker-system, and color flooded his face instead of words as the instrumentals shifted into smooth intonations of a song that once reminded him so very much of his friendâ€"

"\_\*\*I don't want this moment, to ever endâ€"\_"\*\*\_

Transfixing eyes fell around Hiccup's face, and Jack stepped forward, "It is," he whispered.

"â€|\_\*\*Where everything's nothing, without youâ€|"\*\*\_

\_Detach,\_ he told himself, already falling victim to the heart wrenching pressure swelling in his chest as his hand rose shyly to Hiccup's face. "\_God\_, you're so beautiful," he breathed, transferring the sweetest innocence through such honest eyes, and closing another fraction of the space.

"â€|\_\*\*I'd wait here forever, just to see you smile\*\*\_

\_\*\*Cause it's trueâ€"I am nothing, without youâ€|"\*\*\_

Several unsuspecting emerald eyes gravitated upward as the taller boy came closer, and closerâ€"pouring them into Jack's. His face seemed uncertain, but his feet moved forward until they were chest-to-chest, and Jack could feel the rise and fall of Hiccup's heart beating, and sputtering, against the irregularity of his own.

"You must be freezing," Jack mumbled, losing his voice in the motions of drawing the other boy against himâ€"not quite stopping until he could feel his every outline, and knew, more than ever, that he could never let go.

\_\*\*"â€|Through it all, I've made my mistakes\*\*\_

\_\*\*I stumble, and fallâ€|"\*\*\_

And Hiccup shook, shivering against the sensation of fingertips crawling up the length of his back, and folding through his hair, "â€|Jackâ€|"

It was the softest, sweetest sound, and just hearing Hiccup say his name made Jack's fingers flex, entangling themselves further through the strands. "You really don't know how long I've waited for this," he whispered.

"â€|\_\*\*but I mean these wordsâ€|"\*\*\_

"I've missed you so much," Hiccup choked, finally cracking, and collapsing into Jack's chest, with both hands furrowed into his sweatshirt.

Lifting the other boy's head, gently cupping his chin, Jack pressed his lips delicately against each tear as it streaked. "Not nearly as much as I've missed you," he said, in between baby kisses, "I can promise you that," Jack continued, until Hiccup's eyes were closing, and the crying had stopped.

Then emerald eyes reopened, and found themselves pressed tightly into the space below Jack's neck, breathing in the scent of fresh snow, and burying his face deeper into him as the other boy removed his hands from Hiccup's hair, and held his whole body like he was terrified to let go.

"I never thought I'd see you againâ€|"

"â€|\_\*\*I want you to know,\*\*\_

\_\*\*With everything, I wont let this go\*\*\_

\_\*\*These words are my heart and soulâ€¦| "\*\*\_

"I know," Jack's arms pulled forward, involuntarily tightening and loosening as he locked his fingers together behind the small of Hiccup's back, and buried his face into the curve of his shoulder, "I was so afraid I'd lost you."

Now Hiccup's arms found themselves reflexively snaked around his friend's stomach, holding the other steady, "Jack, you're shakingâ€¦|"

With both eyes clenched tightly, breathing in the familiar scent, Jack felt Hiccup accepting his vulnerability, and three years worth of hopelessness left him feeling so small, and so scared, and so unable to hold back his tears. "Never let go," the words came out all muffled beneath the salty liquid and the fabric where his lips pressed into Hiccup. "Just never let me go," he pleaded, "I don't ever want to be away from you, \_ever\_, " Jack breathed out jaggedly, catching on the unfailing honesty.

"â€¦|\_\*\*I'll hold onto this moment, you know\*\*\_

\_\*\*As I bleed my heart out to show,\*\*\_

\_\*\*That I won't let goâ€¦| "\*\*\_

"I never wanted to the first time," Hiccup's voice cracked, cringing against the fast-forward flash of Jack's face falling through the clouds. "And I'll die before I ever do it again."

Jack's head lifted weakly, his eyes completely encased in tears, and reddening under the pressure, "\_God\_, I love you so much," he cracked a fragile smile, never stopping to care how easily he'd said it; leaning his forehead into Hiccup's as he watched the aura-borealis of color flood across the bridge of his nose. "You're everything," Jack closed his eyes, reaching both hands out to hold the other's face, unable to prevent the declining proximity that was closing in around them so magnetically. "You were \_always\_ everything." Jack's voice was straining, and he could feel Hiccup shifting the soft pressure of his fingers, sliding them up his chest while a series of shivers chased after them.

"But I'm not anything without you, Jack," he replied.

The words were so ordinary, but the feeling they evoked was anything but; and within seconds, Jack could feel time beginning to lag as the song faded through the riffs in the wind.

Hiccup's arms hung loosely around his neck, and Jack was still holding his face in his hands. Their eyes were wide openâ€¦"and their breathing was thrown off. Their hearts beat rapidly out of syncâ€¦"and neither of them could disengage. The darkness was cloaking themâ€¦"concealing them from the worldâ€¦"and they slipped into their shared skinâ€¦"never failing to get lost so effortlessly in each other. And there was only one other thing Jack wanted.

"Can Iâ€¦|" then a pause as his face inclined a little closer, "â€¦|Can I kiss you?"

His voice dropped so shyly, producing the most innocent sound, and

against the pale, milky pigmentation of his skin, his ears had gone visibly darker as Jack's cheeks were flushed with forty different feverish shades.

"Since when do you ask?" Hiccup observed, imploring as his lips moved teasingly against the very edges of Jack's, just enough to make one of his hands slide up and furrow more intimately into auburn hair.

"Good point," Jack mumbled, angling his head, and sinking forward with all the tenderness of a first kiss. Warm, uncontrollably heated sensations began to swell in his loins, and he parted Hiccup's lips so slowly at first—savoring the intoxicating effects that quickly became insatiable.

Holding his face more firmly, Jack pulled ever so slightly on the handful of hair that was tangling through his fingers, and eased Hiccup's mouth a little wider as he bit down gently on his bottom lip.

A surprised, breathy noise escaped the green eyed boy; simultaneously extending into a drawn out groan when Jack slid his teeth along the smooth surface, applying just the right amount of pressure as he drew Hiccup's body against his own. The auburn haired youth gave into the contact instantly, repositioning his hands on either side of Jack's stomach in a squeeze, and then pressed his slightly smaller frame into the defined curves of the other's able body.

"How are you so perfect," Hiccup spoke into him, never disconnecting from the kiss as Jack's hand pulled harder at his hair, unwrapping the other from the boy's jaw line, and slinking his arm around Hiccup's back—wasting no more than a second before he lifted every inch of him closer, and angled their entangled bodies backward against the side of the ravine. "How are you so irresistible?" Jack countered, with his eyes still closed, pressing his lips softly, then harder as Hiccup's grip around his hips got tighter.

And then words became lost as their tongues tangled in place of syllables or sounds, and traced sensual, swirling patterns as they moved in sync with the pulling and the pressing of eager, long awaiting lips.

Every inch of Jack shivered, and his torso was forced noticeably forward when he felt Hiccup's fingers collide with his skin, sliding along the length of his slender stomach as he secured Jack's sweatshirt, and began lifting it in the opposite direction. Jack's body followed suit without ever needing any instruction, instinctively raising his arms above his head—proceeding to open his eyes long enough to stare Hiccup down, surrounding him with that deliciously, sexy smirk stitched across his perfect lips.

Hiccup dropped the article of clothing somewhere off to the side, narrowing his eyes in on Jack's mouth before mirroring his expression, "You know how I hate unnecessary things," he formed an unpredictable smile, a smile that only drew Jack's devilishly closer.

"All you had to do was ask," he whispered against Hiccup's ear, with the side of his face pressed alongside the other's. "But I must admit," he purred, sweeping stray strands of hair out of the way, and

claiming the space on Hiccup's neck, "It's kind of turning me on more that you didn't."

"\_Ahâ€\_" Green eyes closed and the response was lost the second he felt the other's mouth, all wet and soft, surrounding the small, sensitive area on his neck, right where it met the beginning of his jaw line. Hiccup's head rolled back naturally, and his breathing grew strained and heavy; meanwhile, Jack formed a self-satisfied grin as he continued sucking at the exposed flesh, causing little dimples to form in his cheeks.

\_God, I must be dreaming,\_ Jack thought, still not fully grasping that this was all really happening, and biting down, just a little, awaiting the reaction from Hiccup to remind him it was.

"\_Jackkkâ€|"\_ and the reaction was both acoustically and visually stimulating as Jack withdrew from the damp, deep purple smudge long enough to watch his name roll off the other boy's tongue in such arousing, frustration.

Green eyes reopened lustfully, and Hiccup reached for Jack's abdomen, reconnecting their bodies, and sliding his palms along the exposure of his back, gripping the shapely protrusions of shoulder blades as he returned the kiss fervently.

"C'mon," Jack complained suddenly, releasing an oxygen-deprived breath, "you're going to make this impossible to stop."

"Maybe that's the point," the other offered, unable to ignore the blood rushing to everywhere but their brains, and invasively outlining every inch of each them.

Jack groaned, feeling the form-fitting fabric of his pants growing tighter, "We should really wait," he insisted, knowing how dangerously impulsive the heat of the moment could become.

"But it feels like I've been waiting for forever," Hiccup admitted shyly, disengaging from the contact to look into Jack's eyes as he spoke.

"Don't remind me," blue eyes pleaded as he started to lose more conviction amidst unbreakable tension that had been building for years.

As the confusion settled in plainly across Hiccup's face, Jack watched his eyes search his face self-consciously. "Did Iâ€|did I do something wrong?" his bottom lip trembled just enough to be noticeable, so Jack covered them gently with his to reassure the worried looks.

"Of course not," he said soothingly, smoothing down the other's tousled auburn hair, "You're clearly doing everything a little \_too well\_." Jack grinned, red-faced at the obvious \_elations\_.

However, the humor was lost to Hiccup. "I don't understand," he glanced at the ground, withdrawing now from the boy's touch.

Jack sighed, but couldn't ignore the right thing to do; as a guardian, it was his job to \_protect\_ innocence, not \_compromise\_

itâ€"even his own. So, as Hiccup's face flushed in and out of focus, Jack knelt down to retrieve his sweatshirt, concealing the slim curvature of his stomach as he slipped it over his head and shrugged inside. By that time, Hiccup had collapsed on the ground with his legs crossed, and his head in his hands, and everything about it pulled relentlessly at Jack's heartstrings. Kneeling down beside his friend, bright blue eyes dimmed and encased Hiccup sadlyâ€"knowing he, himself, had caused this.

"Hey," he broke the silence, but just barely enough to be heard. "Hey c'mere," Jack's intonation fluctuated sensitively, as he forced his arms around Hiccup's stomach.

"Am I justâ€|" Hiccup struggled both to form thoughts and eye contact, clenching his stomach muscles against the embrace, "Am I just not the way you remember me?"

Jack sat all the way down before responding, bringing the other boy's back into his chest. "Please don't take it the wrong way, Hiccup," he rested his chin against the other boy's shoulder, "It's got nothing to do with anything you did, and certainly not anything to do with how you look, okay?" Jack punched his stomach playfully, knowing Hiccup's insecurities all too well. "You're still every bit as skinny as I've always liked you."

Hiccup tipped his head back to glare. "Way to add insult to injury," he sniffled, rubbing at his eyes.

"Way to still take everything too personally," the pallor boy squeezed his arms a little tighter to show it was lighthearted instead of spiteful.

"Says the most easily offended person in the world," the redhead rolled his eyes.

There may have been some truth in that, but Jack didn't rise to the bait. "It's just thatâ€|this is the first time I've seen you in literally forever," he redirected, breathing steadily as the rise and fall of his chest sank against Hiccup, "and there's still so much I haven't said, so much I want to say," Jack rephrased, and he knew Hiccup understood when he curled into his side, and adjusted to fit against him.

"It has been a long time," he agreed quietly, "\_too\_ long."

"I know," Jack said into his hair, closing his eyes, "and I've missed you too damn much to mess this up," he explained sincerely.

"Since when have you ever cared about timing?" Hiccup implored, but not unkindly, resting his hands over the pair intertwined across his stomach.

Jack shifted to refit the spaces between the other's fingers instead of his own, "Since it became everything."

Hiccup sighed this time, flattening himself out more until he was on his side in the snow, and Jack was laying behind him, curling his knees up to cradle the empty space behind his own. The redhead had both hands beneath his head, folded almost prayer-like; while Jack encircled one around his upper body, and draped the other over his

hips.

"I just want to take this slow," he gazed downward, pulling Hiccup's shirt back into place where it had ridden up.

"But why?"

"Because it took me too long to realize how special you are," Jack breathed, shrinking into Hiccup vulnerably, "and that you deserve a lot better than me."

"I don't care what I \_deserve\_," the smaller boy protested uncooperatively.

"Yeah? Well I do," his grip tightened, and suddenly all the words were getting so hard to say againâ€"suddenly they both felt so child-like and smallâ€"so impressionable and scaredâ€"melting back into their simplest form, and sinking once more into the silence of snow fall.

Hiccup's breathing slowly regulated, and Jack could feel each inhale pull into him, and every exhale take him farther away; developing the most adolescent fear of losing this all over again.

"Whyâ€|" Hiccup finally broke the silence, fumbling through unfinished thoughts and unformed words, dragging one finger in circles through the snow. "Why do you care so muchâ€|why," he paused nervously, "why do you always get like thisâ€"all soft and serious at the same time?"

Jack froze, accepting the solitude before he accepted the question. "Do you really even have to ask anymore?" he sighed, answering with a question because he'd never been asked to say it in so many words beforeâ€"explicitâ€"irrevocableâ€"fragileâ€"words.

"Yes," Hiccup's stomach tightened as if to brace himself, "because you've never actually answered me before, honestly at least."

"Honestly?" Jack repeated, curling even more closely into a source of balance, "Honestly..." he inhaled with effort and then exhaled in rigid intervals, as if he couldn't keep his voice from catching.

"Honestly \_what\_, Jack?" Hiccup prompted gently, undeniably aware of how insecurely the other boy had tucked his head into the back of his neckâ€"where he could feel every word hesitate to form.

Jack closed his eyes, almost completely unable to stomach how hard it was to say out loud, feeling susceptible and exposed as he pulled forward, and his voice fell into a whisper, "Because honestly, Hiccup, I'm in love with you."

## 10. Chapter 10

\_\*\*Teehee. Well I thought it would take a lot longer to write this next chapter, but I pumped out nine or so pages (mostly dialogue; so sorry if it seems shorter), and liked the way it ended around the central idea in the other before this. Also; pleeeeeaaaaseee try not

to hate me too much :) things always get a little worse before they get better; but I promise that it won't be slipping into any ungodly sadness the rest of the story lol. Just the inevitability of working through the kinks. \*\*\_

\_\*\*BUT ANYWAYS.\*\*\_

\_\*\*Review Timeee:\*\*\_

\_\*\*Blazelight790: \*\*\_\_lol, I am so sorry to torture you, and apologize in advance that I will proooobably continue to do so, seeing as cliffhangers are my favorite way to concludeâ€|wellâ€|just about everythingâ€|cause you just never really know how something is going to turn out. And sometimes kissing someone, is just as confusing as trying to justify itâ€|.hmm \*evilly leaves a cliffhanger to end the comment\_

\_\*\*Chibiterasu: \*\*\_\_lol, teehee, it's okayâ€|it's probably immature of me to even write this at twenty-years oldâ€|but what can I say? Haha I don't even care, because I'm too in love to stop! And I know, haha I was so excited, I was surprised I let myself write it like thatâ€|usually I don't dive right into the intimate stuff, but it just seemed so fitting after hypothetically torturing Jack and Hiccup for YEARS and eight chapters. Bahah, but I'm glad you found their interaction to be so appealing, and that I can write the intimacy out to be so sexyâ€|because I do, guiltily, love all the strain and tension of crossing boundaries and confusing intentions and how it tends to drive the mind and body to the brink of insanityâ€|THUS! Exploding in all the best ways. And yes, sorry again for the cliffhangers, and even sorrier still that they're probably here to stay lol\_

\_\*\*Rahar Moonfire: Comment #1: \*\*\_\_aw I'm glad that you liked the writing in the chapter, even if its content left you feeling mildly depressed lolâ€|as it always seems to leave my brain in that fashion; but there's just something so addictive about all the hurt/comfort stuff that keeps me coming back to write more! Also; I replied about the review4review thing in a message the other day! Just so you know : )\_

\_\*\*Comment #2: \*\*\_\_lol see! I'm not COMPLETELY heartless; I tried to balance out the extreme sad feels with some oh so happyâ€|jackâ€|feelsâ€|hiccup scenes! Baha. But again, glad you enjoyed!\_

\_\*\*Comment #3: \*\*\_\_lol welllllâ€|.there's that thing about chapter/scene balance againâ€|I hope it doesn't make you think of the chapter as any less awesome though! \_

\_\*\*Animefangirl155: \*\*\_\_hahah YES I have hijacked the HiJack train, and it is a runaway train in deed! And shall keep running along its two way track of tensely tasteful amazingness! So don't let the back and forth confuse you! I promise the moments and the good feels will still keep coming; despite the rest, and the conflict (lol because without one I really wouldn't have a plot or anywhere to go with the story o\_o soâ€|heartbreakingâ€|.thatâ€|I mustâ€|.draw this out! Lol) But yeah, I thought so tooâ€|in terms of his loss for wordsâ€|I mean after three years, that's a hell of a long time to go without being seen or heard or seemingly mattering. And awe, don't cry! Because I'm sure you'd make Jack and Hiccup cry tooâ€|they're a pair of emotional



saps lol; but sexy emotional saps who I enjoy allowing to go a little too far from time to time. Teehee and I thought jack asking for the kiss was too adorable to leave out a full blown escalation. (and, as always, I have written you back a novel long review, and should probably stop so you can get onto the part you CARE about reading! Lol)\_

\_\*\*Animefreakg: \*\*\_\_lol yes the parody was quite lovely! Although I'm glad you clarified, because at first I was like"wait"wahh? Lol and then after reading the 'blvd of broken dreams bit' proceeded to read it over and continue singing it to myself in my head. Lol anyways; I'm glad you liked it slash the twist and the end; and also for being the only one to point out the issue of Jack's emerging 'restraint' as it becomes very key in the plot later.\_

\_\*\*SPskater411: \*\*\_\_oh yesss, I tend to have this effect on people! Jk jk but ohmygawsh, lol very flattering that I've rendered you speechless"tbh I wrote this chapter after having a night with MY best-friend who rendered ME speechless, b/c he's effing adorable (in short, we have/had one of these jack/hiccup complicated friendship bits) ANYWAYS, that's not important, but what is that I say thank you for this review, and welcome to the WORST titled fanfiction in the HISTORY of fanfiction! I hope it continues to capture your interest"ALSO, loving the fact that you ended with a "teehee"because it is literally my favorite random phrase to insert after/before/in the middle of everything"teehee".lol there I go again. \_

\_\*\*-.-.-\*\*\_

\_\*\*HOKAY; HERE-WEHH-GOOHHH\*\*\_

\_\*\*Read. Take A second to probably hate me. Take a breath. Realize I love my readers too much to let them suffer. Review. And await the unraveling of HiJack!\*\*\_

\_\*\*\*Mwahaha.\*\*\*\_

\_\*\*also: I'll explain a tad at the end about where this is going, sort of, or what not. Because I went from no plan, to writing out the ENTIRE plot last night.\*\*\_

\_\*\*Convenient, right?\*\*\_

\_\*\*-.-.-\*\*\_

\_\*\*\*\*\*Chapter Ten.\*\*\_

This next part was the hardest"the part Jack already knew Hiccup couldn't reciprocate. The part where they'd have to drown just in order to breathe"to realize they'd already been pulled under"to understand they were never getting out unless they learned how to swim"to navigate through the currents that fought restlessly to tear them apart. And Jack stayed afloat just long enough to watch them sink.

"\_In\_ love?" Hiccup asked, as if for some reason that one, little word had morphed Jack's confession into a completely foreign concept.

In the simplest summeryâ€"needless to sayâ€"this was not the reaction Jack had been hoping for; and the unreceptive question he'd received in place of a definite response caused his face to drain, and then simultaneously flood with color over the words he'd just let carelessly escape.

The combination had been hard enough to condense into a single sentence of actual wordsâ€"let alone something he could elaborate and expand uponâ€"and Jack felt as if he'd just handed a sappy, misconstrued love letter to the hottest girl in school; only to watch her eyes bulge judgmentally, while shuffling it insincerely out of sight, where she never intended to open it.

"Don't make me say it again." He spoke in such a hushed, yet dominate voiceâ€"implying Hiccup's desire for repetition wouldn't translate into anything substantial anyways.

Hiccup exhaled gradually, reverting back to sarcasm when everything else failed to translate, "Way to take things \_slow\_."

"Well you wanted an answer." Jack's whole face burned. "I never said you were going to \_like\_ it."

Hiccup shifted, turning over until they were facing each other, "I never said I \_didn't\_ like it either," he reasoned, "I justâ€"

"I know," Jack cut him offâ€"knowing was easier than hearing him say it.

The redhead curled into the nape of his neck. "She's going to \_kill\_ me."

Even with his arms wrapped around him, suddenly Jack felt misplacedâ€"never realizing how differently the things he already knew came back to kick his ass as soon as he merged into Hiccup's worldâ€"and they all translated into reality.

"\_Oh\_â€|"

"\_â€|yeah."\_

"Are you twoâ€|?"

"Yes..."

"Why didn't you say something \_earlier,\*\*\*\*\_ Jack blushed furiously, pulling back, suddenly so ungodly embarrassed for thinking he could just walk back into their old life, undisrupted. "You know," he continued, a little hostile, "before I poured my heart out for you to step all over? Or better yet," Jack pressed onward, now spitefully sarcastic. "How about before you decide to go and kiss me back for once? How about before the part where you took my shirt off and grabbed me like sex was going out of \_fucking \_style?" he demanded, getting up suddenly, and leaving the other on the ground to absorb everything he'd just as carelessly dropped.

A guilty expression crept up in his features, and Hiccup sat up, looking on an angle to face where Jack had risen a few feet away.

"Because I completely forgot she existed as soon as I saw you," he admitted embarrassedly, and oh-so out of character; it was certainly not very like Hiccup to misplace such obvious details, not so insensitively, and especially not for his own gain.

"But now that that's "that\_ you can see her loud and fucking clear, huh?"

Hiccup blushed, "We had plansâ€|"

Jack looked away, disinterested, "So?"

"For tonight," the other emphasized, and Jack caught the drift.

It was the most dreadful, depleting sound. "And let me guessâ€"you're still going?"

"She's my girlfriend, Jack," he tried to rationalize, getting to his feet.

"So?" He refused the other any advantage, "I thought I was supposed to be your best-friend?"

"You'll always be my best-friend," Hiccup corrected him, trying to step into him, but Jack only stepped away again.

"She's taking you away from me," the blue-eyed boy yelled back, feeling the tears freeze into place as they so often did when the rest was restricting.

"God," Hiccup breathed out, stopping to stare at him so disappointedly that it hurt, "Are you really that selfish?"

"Me?" Jack's neck snapped in his direction. "Really, Hiccup? Really?" he stepped forward this time, forcefully establishing the height advantage that made him feel more in control. "You really want to talk to me about being selfish, right now?"

"Jackâ€|"

"No," he continued to shake his head unreceptively, "You can't just do all this and then run back to her. Not again."

"Jack it's notâ€"."

"Fucking quit it, okay?" his head snapped back into focus, "Don't even start with all your fucking everything will be okay speeches, I don't want to hear it. Because they're not," he exhaled with great difficulty, unable to catch his breath, "it's not okay. I'm not okay."

Hiccup's eyes squinted even more heartbrokenly, "You know, I kind of wish I never came looking for you now."

And that time, the words hurt too much for Jack to ignore, "Hiccup," he released softly, trying so hard to be sensible, but the other could play dominant just as effortlessly as he could.

"Save it, Jack. I didn't spend all this time wanting to see you, just

so you could scream in my fucking face, and make me feel like an asshole."

"Hiccup," he extended one last gesture, but the emerald-eyed boy slapped it straight to hell.

"How can you honestly stand here and act like you're the only one who had to lose something?" he asked, the sensation of tears swelling in his voice.

"Hiccup" "please just"

"Just what? Listen?" he stared disbelievingly.

The other boy frowned, "I jus"

"It's been three years, Jack. A lot has changed, I've changed," Hiccup screamed back, encircling the other in a mixture of sadness and confusion. "Things are different. I watched you DIE for chris'sake, what did you expect?"

"It's not what I expected," Jack said softly, "it's what I didn't."

Hiccup's eyes refocused, quelling the anger, "Didn't expect what?"

"You to move on so easily." The words weren't meant to be hurtful, not to the extent they drew the redhead down at least; but Jack had to admit, some part of him had hoped" had wanted to believe that coming back would be enough for him to forget her.

Emerald eyes fell to the floor, watching his feet curling into the snow, "Is that what you think I did?" he asked softly, not spitefully or angrily anymore, but attempting to hold himself together. "You think I just moved on?" Then a laugh, a thick, pained, self-reflective expression of such evident falsity, "I wish it were that easy, Jack. I really do."

But Jack turned away from the noise, from the words, and from Hiccup. "She replaced me," his breath broke the air, so cold and clouded as it froze his face.

"No one could ever replace you," Hiccup stepped towards him, trying to convey this simply, but the complications had long since run their course. "And no one ever has."

"No one except for her" "right?" Jack tacked on, stomaching his pride to sacrifice the pain of publicly humiliating himself" it was almost enough to make him withdraw almost completely back into isolation. After all, what was the point? Jack summarized, that's what he meant, even if he didn't say it, and I'm still in second place. Within the first few hours of becoming visible, I've already managed to fuck up everything" He released a deep, burdened sigh, just like old times" "right?"

And suddenly this seemed more and more familiar" like a scene they'd both seen before. After the initial shock had worn away" and the magic had died" they were forced to confront the reality that things were no longer as they once were" a reality that they'd

relived a hundred times, even before Jack's fall from grace.

\_Hiccup was out with Astrid again, and Jack was thoroughly unimpressed. \_\_\*\*What's so great about her \_\_\*\*anyways\_\_\*\* that yesterday wasn't enough?\_\_ Jack thought irritated. \_\_\*\*What's so important that it's taking \_\_\*\*all\_\_\*\* fucking day? \_\_\*\*It seemed to the brunette that ever since she'd begun to share the secret that Hiccup was keeping a dragon instead of killing one, that the two of them had grown closer in such a short span of timeâ€”and Jack was feeling less and less special by the second.\_

\_ But it was weirdâ€”for both of themâ€”because until then, they'd both been invisible. Well, Hiccup was invisible, and Jack just loved to spend time in his shadow, ignoring his own symmetry in favor of getting lost in the one he'd always liked better. It wasn't like that anymore thoughâ€”because Astrid was slipping between the spaces and forcing Jack back into himself while she tried Hiccup on for size.\_

\_\*\*Way to conveniently start caring,\_\_ Jack thought mentally towards her, both irritated and unreceptive towards the fact that she'd never given Hiccup the time of day before, but now she suddenly wanted to spend all of hers, alone, with him. And on one hand, he was annoyed because he knew Hiccup was enthralled with what he conveyed to Jack as 'progress', and what Jack thought was a sad excuse not to see through the dishonesty of what she was doingâ€”which was, on the other, what made him so angry and so impervious to the idea that Astrid's interest could be genuine when Hiccup had loved her for forever, but it had taken a dragon for her to notice him.\_

\_And even though everything had been too recent to really bridge anything between her and Hiccup, Jack wondered how it could be so obvious to him, the one who never saw the parallels, and yet escape Hiccup so instantaneouslyâ€”\_\_\*\*you're supposed to be the smart one,\_\_ he sighed, \_\_\*\*why can't you see what she's doing, Hiccup?\_\_ And in his mind, it was that simpleâ€”and Astrid was \_\_\*\*simply\_\_ using himâ€”twisting himâ€”instilling the belief that he'd only now become interesting. \_ And it didn't just bother him either, it made him angry too, so god damn angry, because nothing pissed him off more than when people tried to make Hiccup feel like he didn't belong, just because he was a little differentâ€”and when they disregarded every little detail of his personality and potential that Jack had always seen so clearlyâ€”had always loved the most.

—

\_However, Hiccup seemed to forget all of thatâ€”forget that Jack had been his only friend till nowâ€”forget that she had only ever made his life an unbearable hellâ€”forget that he stood out the most by just being himself; instead, he was too wrapped up in the idea that someone had put their faith in him. And even though Jack knew that it went without saying that he, of all people, would honor Hiccup's secret without questionâ€”he also knew that for Astrid, the decision was different, because it went against her entire way of life, and so there was something special about it, but that had just continuously made everything about it even worse.\_

\_She had always been an 'outsider', but now she had broken through the surfaceâ€”she had entered their worldâ€”uninvitedâ€”and suddenly it was as if Hiccup had someone \_\_\*\*else\_\_ to share his secrets withâ€”someone \_\_\*\*else\_\_ who he wanted to spend constant time

withâ€"someone \_\_\*\*else\*\*\_\_ who mattered on more than just any levelâ€"but most importantly, someone else who \_\_\*\*wasn't\*\*\_\_ Jack.\_

\_\_\*\*For real,\*\*\_\_ he shook his head, glancing out his window at the sky that was shifting through shades of indigo and violet as the sun sank out of sight, \_\_\*\*that bitch better watch her back.\*\*\_\_

"Why do you \_insist\_ on making it into a competition?" Hiccup's head shook, so frustrated he almost forgot to breatheâ€"turning red from both the shortage and the context. "I swear to godâ€"sometimes you're worse than she is," he added incredulously, falling back into this routine of theirs as if it were unbroken.

"Because," Jack argued stubbornly, too scorned and too cynical to ignore the awkward string of words he'd left hanging in the air earlierâ€"unanswered, "You \_clearly\_ made your choice."

And this time Hiccup was too infuriated to play the sensitivity card, and he shot back with a blow bellow the belt. "Well maybe if you didn't have to go and play hero then I never would of had to make it in the \_first\_ \_place\_," he shouted. "Maybe if you would have \_talked\_ to me instead of going all \_Jack\_â€"then we might've stood a chance."

Jack's face burned, "How \_dare\_ you even use that against me right now," he said accusingly, "I'm sorry dying wasn't \_good enough\_ for you, Hiccup. I'm sorry I didn't have enough time to \_think it through\_."

"Well maybe you shouldn't be thinking about it at all," Hiccup said, clearly agitated as he fell back into the root of conversation, "It's not a competition. You're just different. The end."

"Yeah?" Jack challenged, "Well excuse \_me\_, but you can't act like what \_just\_ \_happened\_ \_\_\*\*didn't\*\*\_\_â€"\_just\_ \_happen\_, okay? So don't try and tell me you're not busy weighing us against each other in that overactive brain of yours. Or did you just forget that \_I'm\_ the one who knows you so well?"

"What's that supposed to mean?" he glared suddenly, narrowing his eyes at the wording.

"That she never even noticed you until you \_did\_ something, but I saw you before anyone else could," Jack's lower lip trembled, too overturned by the tumult of feelings they'd been forced to swallow in a single sitting.

Then Hiccup paused, mouth in mid motion, as if suddenly the same realization had smacked him in the face, losing all conviction in the chaos, and sinking back into himself at the sight of Jack in such emotional turmoil. "Hey," he reached forward softly, completing the gesture despite noticing how the other had flinched at its possibility, but not withdrawn when Hiccup's hand held onto his arm. "Iâ€"I didn't mean it Jackâ€"for thisâ€"or for herâ€"orâ€".or any of it," he sighed, glancing down sadly. "It's justâ€"too muchâ€"too soonâ€"and until nowâ€"I thought you were dead."

Despite the immature inkling to rip away from Hiccup and scream at him rather than actually trying to rationalize this out, Jack forced

himself to meet those expansive, green eyes he knew would melt everything back into focus. "I know," he reached out too this time, and pulled the other in close, even though a piece of him still feared rejection. "And I didn't meanâ€¦toâ€¦I don't know," his face flushed and furrowed at how he must interpret his feelings as if they were so hard to believe, "freak you out or anything."

"I know," Hiccup replied, hushing the embarrassment towards such blatant insensitivity, not fully understanding why he'd shone it to the person he was so ridiculously happy to have re-found. "And you didn'tâ€¦freak me out, I mean," he added after a pause. "I should never have reacted like that."

"Maybe you were right to," Jack sighed, tucking Hiccup's head under his chin as he felt the other reposition, "we justâ€¦.before all thisâ€¦.we just left things soâ€¦"

"â€¦\_Unfinished?\_" Hiccup cut him off.

Jack's arms squeezed tighter, "Exactly."

"So you understand" he tilted his head to the side, his eardrum pressed to Jack's chest, so closely he could hear his heartbeat as it quickened and protracted, "that this is still all new for me."

"No, that's what I don't get though," Jack posed sadly. "You seemed so into the idea earlier, and a thousand times before this, but then as soon as I say something about it, you act like I'm talking in another language," he pulled their bodies away, but only enough to establish eye contact, "How is it new, if its been going on since before I went away?" he finished, as if substituting death with a euphemism could make it any less permanent.

"Because I never fully understood the way I felt, or what was going on between usâ€¦with you all that time," Hiccup stared up simply, but then sensitively at the words, "and because you never told me you were \_in love\_ with me before."

"Please, don't remind me that I did at all," Jack turned away, trying to dissuade the color on his face that was beyond his control, but felt a small, steady hand bringing it back into place.

"It's not that I don't love you," his hands tightened at the other's sides, "because I do. More than anything," he clarified, "And I should have said soâ€¦butâ€¦."

"But it's not the same for you," Jack finished. "It can't be. You're \_in love\_ with \_her\_." And as hard as he tried not to, it always sounded like an accusation.

Hiccup's eyes widened and pooled innocently, unaware of how to differentiate between the two things that meant so much to him, "I have been for half my life, you already knew that," and it was true, Jack knew, \_everybody\_ knew. "And the way I love you is justâ€¦so differentâ€¦" he concluded for a lack of better ways to define what had always been indefinable.

"I feel like \_such\_ an idiot," Jack breathed out, closing his eyes.

"\_I'm\_ the idiot," Hiccup insisted, "I'm the one who knew and didn't care. I'm the one who let you kiss me, because I'm the one who wanted you to," he stood on his tip-toes, " and because I'm the one who never wanted it to stop," he confessed, brushing his lips against Jack's. "And I \_still\_ don't want it to."

That \_had\_, however, taken Jack by surpriseâ€"the honestyâ€"the actionâ€"the willingness to go backwards after they'd shot forward inconceivably into disarray and hostilityâ€"by the fact that Hiccup hadn't tried to take any of it backâ€"or pretend he wanted it to go away at all. "Then what \_do\_ you want," Jack dipped down, returning the exchange with his lips lingering just a little longer.

"To figure this out," the other wrapped his arms around his friend's neck, because close was never close enough, "to figure \_us\_ outâ€"|"

\*\*\_.\_.\_.\_\*\*

\*\*okay, okay, soâ€"|a few things\*\*

\*\*don't worry, the YAY moments will CTN in spite of the tension\*\*

\*\*also don't worry, because no I will not let Astrid completely dominate the story, she's simply a tool in the writing :)\*\*

\*\*a lot of the rest of this story is going to start coming in weird past/present parallels [even though I've already been doing this] but they're all gonna focus more in on how all this came to be in the first place. So DUH, good stuff. Not so much all the dying and the WTF moments\*\*

\*\*now that I've written all thisâ€"|I'm starting to realize there was no pointâ€"and that I didn't really accomplish anything hah. Oopsy-daisy\*\*

\*\*Did I mention I'd love reviews? : )\*\*

\*\*\_.\_.\_.\_\*\*

## 11. Chapter 11

\_\*\*Hokay; so yeah; I totally don't mean to leave the end of this chapter like this lol, but I totally stayed up all night doing some none-stop-i-hope-all-this-doesn't-totally-suck-writingâ€"|.and this chapter is already like twenty pages? Haha which is SO much longer than ANYTHING else I've posted for this story; so I decided to just post it as is now, and then continue onto the next once I've written more.\*\*\_

\_\*\*This chapters a lot of introspection or whatever blahblah; but whenever I do that, I try to add in flashback stuff for you guys so it's not totally blah lol ;p\*\*\_

\*\*\_\*\*OH, and goooood; so yeah\*\*\_

\*\*\_btw\_\*\*



\*\*\_i'm aware that i'm terrible at following totally 'in sync' with the movies plot\_\*\*

\*\*\_so please excuse the fact that there are all these more modern, w/e references\_\*\*

\*\*\_that come up, mostly, in their conversations.\_\*\*

\*\*\_haha like i won't ever actually have them like watch tv...or anything like that\_\*\*

\*\*\_because it just sounds weird; but yeah hopefully its not too offsetting.\_\*\*

\*\*\_I've already referenced other random stuff in other chapters,\_\*\*

\*\*\_but I notice I do it a lot more in this one, flashback wise.\_\*\*

\_\*\*An-ayyy-whooo.\*\*\_

\_\*\*Comment reviews:\*\*\_

\_\*\*Cold Colors: \*\*\_\_hahah, oh dear; yes, I expected to get some shit for introducing any sort of female presenceâ€"but what fun is shameless fanfiction without all the appropriate sexual tension to charge up the good parts? Hahah I'm trying to make her presence as neutral as possible. Eeek. Lol and yeah, I figured this was def. gonna be a WTF chapter (in regards to reactions) lol but I'm glad you could still enjoy it as well! And sowwy this chapter is slower and less drama :(\_

\_\*\*Blazelight790: \*\*\_\_Woot! Well if you didn't expect it, then my attempt to go the less traditional route (sort of lol) def. worked! And yes, I know, it was slightly heartbreaking for meâ€"because in my head I was like "AND NOW THEY'RE TOGETHER AND THEY'RE HAPPY AND IN LOVE FOREVERRRR" but then the story would basically be over, which made me sad face lol. But yea, I figured a fight would be a nice change of pace, and that their emotions would be all out of whack anyways; plus I'm bipolar as a mofo, so I love to flipflop. ALSO; I know it doesn't seem too big of a deal, but I appreciate the comment about everyone being in characterâ€"because honestly sometimes I'm so bad about bending characters to how I see them, and they stray a tad from how they're 'supposed' to be.â€"and yeah, I'm in love with cliffhangers; expect way too manyâ€"all the timeâ€".hahah\_

\_\*\*Chibiterasu: \*\*\_\_oh no! \*ducks out of the way of flying tables\* your poor furniture :[ lol ahh, well I'm sorry to cause you so much frustration; however, I am lovingggg the intense review! Hah, and yeah, I was hoping it would make everyone hate her a little less cause she's not like trying to be a bitchâ€"although I sort of ruin that in this chapter (oopsssss). But yeah; I figure there's gotta be some super, unresolved emotional conflict between them; and although I feel bad for our poor, beautiful little dead boy lolâ€"he's just so easy to put into this heartbreakingly heartwarming situations. But yeah; idk exactly, I'm kind of playing with Hiccup's feelings/understandings as I write the story, I kind of feel like that makes it more realisticâ€"because its constantly subject to

change and such. For now, I'd say there's clearly a mixture of sexual and emotional attractions that are fucking with them though lol. And ahh sorry for hyping you up to probably put you to sleep with this chapter (jk it's not that bad lol); but the chapter after this will be significantly more on edge and such. And yes lol sorry I am the FARTHEST from the 'happy' anything writerâ€"ahh, but even I can't torture characters for that longâ€"and plus I'd never dream of ending a story unhappily. That would just be sad. Oh and yeahhhh; the cliffhangers are FOREVER hahah\_

\_\*\*\*\*\*also; gonna bold this, cause I'm giving you random props, because for some reason I kept thinking about what you wrote about 'the immoral part of his brain' and I hadn't even been thinking about introducing the idea that it was purely sexual lol even though now that I think of it that should've been obvious; oh wellâ€"point isâ€"I ended up using the concept randomly in Jack's little narration momentsâ€"so thanks!\*\_

\_\*\*Animefreakg: \*\*\_\_thanks! Glad you like how the dialogue played out! It's still def. one of those things that I adore writing back and forth between charactersâ€"but since it's so structured off how I have conversations (etc) I'm always nervous it doesn't always come off as 'good' or what not to other people. But yes, I am for more realistic, relatable stuffâ€"and so I'm glad you found it to be so! Also lol thank you for all the little parodies lol they make me smile. Haha and good, I'm glad another reader does not officially hate me for the implication of Astrid; she'll be around for awhileâ€|.but we all know what her place will be eventuallyâ€|.Anyways, enjoy the next chapter, again, as I've said to like everybody so far; it's kind of long but not as thrilling I guess? But ohwellz idk I'm too over critical lol\_

\_\*\*Rahar Moonfire: \*\*\_\_lol yes, I feel your painâ€"even as the writerâ€"and even though I get to obviously decide what happensâ€"from time to time I write these scenes and even I'm like WTF IS WRONG WITH YOU TWO; KISS AND MAKE UP! And yeah, they are certainly two headstrong little balls of testosteroneâ€"but I do still strongly feel like they're coming from such opposite frames of mind in terms of their r/s and stuff; so I think it's gonna work out nicely the way stuffs going so far. Also; this is a good pointâ€"I know I've played around with the idea of Jack like saying something like that to him, but at the same time, part of me is not sure I even want to bring it up conversationally between themâ€|but I'm thinking it might become inevitable.\_

\_\*\*\*\*\*also; totally don't know if I indirectly included some element of your comment, in terms of the whole 'what would hiccup say' buuut I do have sort of a reference so such in this chapter, just things Jack is thinkingâ€"and it may have been a pre-written excerpt I wrote before, but it may not. SO I'm just going to go ahead and give you props, and give a shout out because I ended up incorporating it into this chapter! So thank you for the review/inspiration!\*\_

\_\*\*SPskater411: \*\*\_\_hahah dude, poor Astridâ€|.if she was realâ€|.she would legit just get like bombarded with rotten vegetables and hard objects everytime she left her houseâ€|probably like "whoa what the hell!" haha like has no idea why everyone hates her. Ahh, oh well. But yeah; I'm trying to balance her roll nicely enough so it adds to the story, but doesn't distract from the HiJack

too much. And yeah; lol if you'd like to see that jealousy, I think it may appear in a flashback sort of thing that I've been playing around with for awhile lol because I do figured Hiccup should be jealous for once. Cause yeahâ€”holy shitâ€”poor Jack; like is being dead and miserable not enough? Hah NOPE I'm gonna make it worse for him! Anyways; yes; more drama/tension will be more prevalent in chapter 12 for sure, so try not to hate me for chapter 11\_

\_\*\*KittyBlue: \*\*\_\_Ahhhhhh; yessssssssss; thank you for enjoying the fact that my plot flip flops indiscernibly from chapter to chapter; because as the writer I obviously know what I'm planning to do with it/where it's going; but I get so bored without throwing twists and drama in, but I'm always so afraid it just completely lacks continuity hah-so woohoo! And I'm terribly sorry that this fic stole hours of precious sleep from you \*gasp\* I love my sleep! Hahah. And ohhhgoooooodnesss gracious, blushing for sure about the comments regarding my writingâ€”because it's def not everyone's cup of teaâ€”but I'm an English major (with awful grammar haha) and I'm like freakishly analytical and so inlove with words and alliteration-you will notice that I use more effing "S" words then should ever be allowed in life, and I insist also on putting them in the same sentence. Lol and yes, yes I'm "wax-poetic" as one of my English teachers always told me; plus poetry is my strong suit; so it makes sense I suppose! And yes; I have a pretty clear idea of where I'm taking the storyâ€”as far as guidelinesâ€”but as far as the actual chapter to chapter content-things will continue to be unexpectedly developing, as best as I can make them at least. Ayyeee; speaking of not making sense anymoreâ€”that is probably what this comment is turning into because I can feel my brain shutting off. BUT; here is the next chapter; yeah, I still feel the need to apologize to everyone for it, cause I'm so on the fence and hope its not too dull. AND; glad I was able to pass along the smut dreams! Everybody should be filled with such wondrous thoughts!\_

\_\*\*SweetSoul3155: \*\*\_\_ahh no! I hope your heart is still good! Lol jk haha, butttt oh there will be more; and even more hijacky loveliness coming along in chapter 12; this current chapter was more plot progression and flashbacks/background. But thanks so much for the review! And I hope you continue to enjoy the fic :D\_

\_\*\*Inapproite-Sales: \*\*\_\_good, I keep reading your comment over in some weird accent that I know is from a movie hahaâ€”sorry none of that was relevant! But thank you so much! I'm glad you like itâ€”especially enough to like it a lot! And thanks for leaving a review! I appreciate the support\_

\_\*\*FeatherFlight109: \*\*\_\_damn it! Hahah you're the second reader I've ever had who points out that I do that; sadly as an English majorâ€”no I do it intentionally, not as a typo. Sorry if its confusing, idk why I think about it the oppositeâ€”like in my brain I'm like oh okayâ€”you have two eyesâ€”so SEVERAL eyesâ€”and I think of 'eyes' as in being plural of eyeâ€”but not like plural in terms of SETS of eyesâ€”.yeah whoa sorry, sometimes my way of thinking should not be explained haha I just reread that and am hoping now that it does not come off stupid. ANYWAYS; I'll try to keep an eye out for it and keep it under control; although it'll probably pop up still; I hope its not too distracting. Good; and actually the pairing was weird to me at first tooâ€”then I fell in lloveâ€”then I was unsure

againâ€”but I started writing this and I was like "whoa this makes so much weird sense actually" so I can def. relate! Anywho; thanks so much for the review, and the support/feedback! Also; lol I'm glad you like my endless, random, poetic description and that you're open to giving the choppy-back-and-forth style a shot; because I try my best to make it all work lol.\_

\_\*\*PHEW;\*\*\_

\_\*\*For some reason I feel like I was just doing comment reviews for eighty years\*\*\_

\_\*\*\*probably because I insist on writing people novel long responses\*\*\*\_

\_\*\*but; HOKAY; as I said\*\*\_

\_\*\*This chapter is longerâ€”but sort of a progressive/plot developing/what not chp.\*\*\_

\_\*\*With some flashbacks and such thrown in.\*\*\_

\_\*\*It's maybe one of my most skeptical so far; probably since it's so much longer I'm afraid somehow it took away from everything.\*\*\_

\_\*\*So ANYWAYS; yeah please review lol; because I love all of you for it\*\*\_

\_\*\*OH AND PS: seeing as how this chapter took a rest from the hijack-heart-attack rush from the last fewâ€”CHAPTER TWELVE; shall contain some sort of treat for you all and your patience :D\*\*\_

\_\*\*Don't think I don't think about you guys! Lol\*\*\_

\_\*\*-.-.-\*\*\_

\*\*Chapter Eleven.\*\*

"\_To figure this out...to figure \_\_\*\*us\*\*\_\_ outâ€”|" \_

The series of simple, soft, and such seemingly unspecific words escaped endlessly through Jack's mind long after they'd parted ways. \_What was he really trying to say? \_He thought; drawing his features in stubbornly, and framing them unreceptively, \_figure '\_\_\*\*us'\*\*\_\_ out?\_ Jack added inconclusively.

\_Honestlyâ€”what does that even mean? \_

What did words like "us" stand to represent or emphasize when the term had never been so unclear? \_How can he say that to me, and then still want to see her so badly?\_ Jack wondered insecurely, unable to emit any confidence under the pressure of such inadequacy. \_How could he not \_\_\*\*know\*\*\_\_? \_the winter reincarnate continued, never doubting or questioning himself more than he was right nowâ€”|.

A thought popped into his head sadly, echoing in the most unconfident doubtâ€”|

\_Are we really that close tied? \_He breathed in and out slowly, giving it pause, but found he didn't like the eerie, unanswered silence that followed.

Nothing about any of this was simple.

He was jealous of her; yet, somehow, he couldn't accept the fact of how undeniable it was. \_Jealous? \_\_\*\*Me\*\*\_\_? \_He thought it over absurdly-never one to wear it all on his sleeveâ€”Jack had long since learned to shadow insecurity in overconfidence. \_Why should I care just because he likes her? \_Jack purposely reduced Hiccup's feelings into less than a fraction of what they truly were, \_and why should I be jealous just because they're probably off making out, alone, in his room, or something? \_But even hypothetically, the suggestion made all the fingerprints on Jack's skin turn to acid, burning furiously where Hiccup's hands had been, and turning Jack's face a similar shade of bright burgundy and regret.

\_So what if she's probably seen more of him than I have,\_ he continued, never satisfied with the extent of self-torture, never able to quell this obsession with how offsetting the whole idea of them together really was for him. \_It doesn't even matter, because neither does she,\_ Jack dismissed ineffectually, but he felt so smallâ€”and unstableâ€”and so very unsound amidst the freefall of fantasy and reality that was colliding so effortlessly, and producing such an ever lasting emphasis on how disorienting it was.

Slipping into the sequence, the backwards deconstruction of how he'd overlooked this in the first place, Jack couldn't help but remember back to a few days agoâ€”to when Astrid had called out to Hiccupâ€”and Jack had turned away immediatelyâ€”too aware to know he would hate whatever he saw; but unaware that their behavior had extended into titles and proof now, such facts that the pallor boy could neither stomach, nor summarize into a simple series of words.

The whole thing was so degrading, and so self-abusive, but it was the only noise of Hiccup's he had left to replayâ€”the only unturned instance that Jack hadn't scarified to their time in the forestâ€”because he'd kept all the words to himself. Rather than admitting he'd never been more wrong, it was so much easier to pretendâ€”pretend this was something that he could just walk away from.

After all, he'd told himself hundreds of times before this that it wasn't Hiccup's faultâ€”that Jack wasn't thereâ€”and she wasâ€”but the conviction was proving so insincere now that his claims had collapsed against the reality that challenged themâ€”against the fact that this was no longer hypothetical, but an actuality that Jack wasn't prepared to confront.

\_This was never easy though,\_ he sighed, helplessly surrendering himself to the weight that dragged him down, leaning into his staff when even gravity overpowered his ability to stand beneath the burden of something that he'd been carrying for years. Like the sweetest secret of immeasurable size that had started out so simple, and then snowballed out of symmetry; transforming all Jack's emotions into an intricate mass of inconsistent materialsâ€”emotions that he soon lost sight of how to express under such sensitive circumstances.

Things had always been like that with Hiccup thoughâ€”so unpredictableâ€”so unclearâ€”so boundary bending, and so very, very hard. No, this was nothing new to Jack, and things between them had never been simple.

\_But then again, I've never come back from the dead before to tell him that I'm in love with him either, \_ Jack indirectly insulted his idiotic and untimely declarations once moreâ€”merely to disguise the guilt of complicating what was always so fragile to begin with. \_He could hardly even stand to hear the things I \_\_\*\*used\*\*\_\_ to say, \_he reminded himself, mentally cataloging all the subtle, but suggestive hints he'd dropped in the past. \_So what made me think all of a sudden he could handle something like \_\_\*\*that\*\*\_\_, \_the mortified youth emphasized conclusively, scarcely able to repeat the details of his confession in their actual form, because part of him still refused to believe it was beyond his powers to expel from memory.

You seeâ€”that was the trouble with opening doors; you could never fully close them once you did. There were certain realities you couldn't outrun, and with them came a series of lies and falsehoods that you could no longer remedy the pain of knowing with. Because knowledge was painâ€”which was why it hurt so damn much for Jack to know aboutâ€”to know how long he'd really loved herâ€”to know that everything they'd been through wasn't enoughâ€”that even after everything, he was still going to lose it allâ€”to \_her\_â€”

\_I guess there's no pretending...\_He breathed in deeply, or at least tried to, just some sort of motion set at a steady pace, but the rest was coming whether he liked it or not.

The scarcest trails of salt brimmed against his eyelids, and Jack got the most uncertain pain in his stomachâ€”\_he was going to sleep with her, \_ he formed the thought gradually, and with moderate difficulty, not quite capable of defining what about it bothered him so deeply; but the cognitive compliance was beating restlessly with the shallow, irregular pressure in his chest, and Jack had to close his eyes just to force out the footage that wouldn't stop looping, like endless madness, in every corner of his brainâ€”

"\_What the \_\_\*\*hell\*\*\_\_ is \_\_\*\*that\*\*\_\_?" Jack heard Astrid \_demanding, struggling to fit the expressionâ€”almost confused in her approach, as if the hickey was somehow misplaced on Hiccup specifically, before growing unavoidably angry. Infuriation trumping shock and disbelief when there was no way for her to simplify the bruise into anything other than exactly what it wasâ€”which was \_\_\*\*not from her.\*\*\_\_

"\_And don't you \_\_\*\*dare\*\*\_\_ say that it's nothing, Hiccup," she shot him down before he had the chance to consider denying it. "Because it's clearly a rather \_\_\*\*big\*\*\_\_ something," Astrid snapped, her tone of voice implying she'd taken a second to gawk at the not so subtle size of skin that Jack had sucked from flesh colored to broken blood vessels of deep, and widespread purple.\_

\_It was big, bold, and as far as Jack was concernedâ€”absolutely brilliant. Both an exchange of affection, and the instillation of a warningâ€”a repercussion that, either way, made acknowledgement as necessary as it was involuntary. Placement was everything, and Jack

had secured the most sensitive spaceâ€"it was too close range to be accidentalâ€"too well formed to be briefâ€"and \_\_\*\*way\*\*\_\_ too intimately positioned to qualify as an impersonal gesture. Instead, the hickey was up close and personal, quite intentional, quite possibility the best he'd ever given before, and without a doubt, the most sensually charged act of sexual frustration. \_

\_In theory, one, little, hickey seems harmless enough, but it was almost eerie how easily it overthrew the atmosphere into a deafening silence. For a second, it was almost enough to stir just the tiniest fraction of guilt, but such an outlandish fault was easily refused by unsympathetic ignorance. \_

\_Several drawn out sighs, and seven minutes laterâ€"Hiccup still hadn't even spoken yet; and Jack could only imagine the idiotically enigmatic expression amplified unnecessarily across the other boy's face, juxtaposing against Astrid in full-on battle-stance, approaching everything aggressively and mistrustfully. \_

\_\*\*What an idiot, \*\*\_\_Jack rolled his eyes, still too wrapped up in the rejection to sympathize with his friend just yet, but too stubborn not to be involved in every second of this. \_\_\*\*I deserve to know, \*\*\_\_he continued to justify his invasiveness, \_\_\*\*and just because he doesn't have the balls to tell me, doesn't mean I don't have the right to hear this.\*\*\_

\_\*\*Right? \*\*\_\_But in truth, this idea had already blurred and turned all shades of grey. He'd given him his word, with fingers crossed, he'd sworn to Hiccup at least a \_\_\*\*hundred\*\*\_\_ times, that he wouldn't do thisâ€"wouldn't followâ€"wouldn't interfere with their dateâ€"\_\_\*\*But honestly like \*\*\_\_\*\*that\*\*\_\_\*\* was going to stick,\*\*\_\_ Jack rolled his eyes a second time, still hovering outside Hiccup's half-open, bedroom window, unseenâ€"hearing every word as he shamelessly eavesdropped.\_

\_In all fairness though, how could he not? How could he possibly honor such a promise, when betraying it was even more effortless? It wasn't like he was \_\_\*\*trying\*\*\_\_ to be a dick about itâ€"not necessarily; because to be honest, Jack had gone as far as to promise \_\_\*\*himself\*\*\_\_ thatâ€"under no circumstancesâ€"would he creepâ€"out of sheer spitefulness towards knowing he may never get over what he bore witness to. \_

\_However, promises easily made, are just as easily broken, and as far away from Hiccup's as he walked, the curiosity began to overcompensate the consequences, making it near impossible to undersell how truly undying his urge was to \_\_\*\*know\*\*\_\_â€"to know where they stoodâ€"to know how serious they'd gotten this timeâ€"but above allâ€"to know he'd gotten the satisfaction of watching her fill with the same infuriation she'd caused him when she locked eyes with his not-so-little love bite on her boyfriend's neck.\_

\_A mark that Hiccup could never hope to explain, and that simple fact only enhanced the guilty pleasure of watching the uncertainty drive Astrid absolutely mad, smirking as she struggled to sort it all outâ€"too satisfied with knowing she'd receive no sound sense of closure.\_\_\*\*She deserves that much,\*\*\_\_ he thought selfishly, \_\_\*\*she deserves to suffer too.\*\*\_

"\_I mean, good \_\_\*\*god\*\*\_\_, Hiccup. Were you trying to be subtle?"

She sneered sarcastically, and expertly degraded his already evident lack of skill for evasion at the same time. "Seriously, could it even \_\_\*\*be\*\*\_\_ any bigger for crying out loud?" He could hear her shuffling and repositioning angrily, "Who even gave it to you, anyways?"\_

\_\*\*And bingo was his namooo,\*\*\_ Jack sang smugly, smiling to himself, and admiring once again how he \_\_\*\*had\*\*\_\_ created quite the embellishment across Hiccup's neckline, and such an unavoidable source of evidence too.\_

"\_Well?" Astrid demanded impatiently, prompting Hiccup when only silence fell. "Who \_\_\*\*is\*\*\_\_ she?"\_

\_And this made Jack laugh, in spite of the immaturity. \_\_\*\*She?\*\*\_\_ He grinned, feeling ever so slightly more victorious, \_\_\*\*try \_\_\*\*he\*\*\_\_-doll face. \_\_And Jack wanted so badly to say it straight to her face, just so he could watch the stupid, dumfounded expression sink in and drain all the color in her cheeksâ€"the pure inability to process, not only\_\_ that \_\_\*\*Hiccup\*\*\_\_â€"the prime paradigm of loyalty and virtueâ€"had \_\_\*\*cheated\*\*\_\_ on herâ€"but that it was with someone of his own sexâ€"another \_\_\*\*boy\*\*\_\_â€"the \_\_\*\*ultimate\*\*\_\_ mind fuckâ€" Jack concluded, rather proud of himself for no reason, trying desperately to feed his confidence with false pretences of his level of security with their relationship.\_

\_Astrid however, continued on her mission to attack and destroy. "Are you going to \_\_\*\*answer\*\*\_\_ me at least?" she asked, already knowing he wasn't about to. "Or are you still too busy trying to make up excuses in your head?"\_

\_\*\*Hmm, at least she isn't stupid, \_\_Jack observed, forgetting he had actually once admired her for itâ€"for being the only girl he'd ever known who took charge and no shit from anyoneâ€"who carried herself rather than waiting to be swept off her feetâ€"who spat all the evident bullshit back out instead of swallowing it whole. Yes, at one point, Jack could admit he'd found her quite fascinating; but that was before she stopped using her powers for good and began plotting with them evillyâ€"before she'd used them against him, and stolen everything.\_

\_\*\*Seriously, I might have to kill her,\*\*\_ Jack sighed, lacking any and all malice, then faltering back into silence on a lack of conviction; slowly abandoning the idea to turn his attention back to his friend, whose voice finally broke the air.\_

"\_I'm not making up excuses," Hiccup dismissed the statement, but ineffectually, in that puppy-dog tone she always provokedâ€"like Hiccup always shrunk away from her with his tail between his legs, "I'm just listening."\_

"\_Because you find what I'm saying so amusing, Hiccup?" she questioned, laughing disbelievingly, "Are you \_\_\*\*serious \*\*\_\_right now!" And that was the first and only time in his life that Jack had heard Astrid sound so insecure, sinking inconsistently through her otherwise impenetrable defenses. "Do you think this is \_\_\*\*entertaining?\*\*\_\_"

"\_Of course not," Hiccup's voice withdrew realistically, almost reprimanding, as if somehow she should have already known



that.\_

"\_Well \_\_\*\*what\*\*\_\_ then, Hiccup. What happened that you so obviously think I'm over-reacting about?"\_

\_\*\*Nicely played,\*\*\_ Jack gave her unintentional props, knowing Hiccup would fall right into it, and all the wrong things to say.

\_

\_The other boy's voice wavered like a nervous shrug. "Nothing." And although he knew why he \_\_\*\*had\*\*\_\_ to say itâ€"it still hurt like hell to hear. "It meant \_\_\*\*absolutely\*\*\_\_ nothing."\_

\_Jack cringed. \_

"\_Nothing?" she asked, nearing hysterics, "That's \_\_\*\*really\*\*\_\_ the answer you're going with on this?" Astrid prompted him, almost hopefully, leaving a ten second opening for Hiccup to retract and, or re-submit his response before closing the window of opportunity with an accusatory retort. "Because for something that means 'nothing,'â€"you sure as hell look pretty fucking guilty to me."\_

\_\*\*Does he?\*\*\_ Jack wondered, becoming the hopeful one this time, wishing he could see their faces, to translate every little expression and all their body language. Overly contemplative, now curious as to what cues Hiccup was giving awayâ€"what subtle signsâ€"the kind of things Jack knew how to find, and Astrid didn't even know where to look for.\_

\_The tiny fluctuations and drops in speech, the self-directed dilatation and constricting that changed the color in his eyes, and whichever nervous, and or, self-conscious habit Hiccup pulled out of his hatâ€"The behavior that acted like a navigation key on an atlasâ€"giving Jack the proper directions to map out what was really going through the other's mind.\_

\_But as of late, the terrain had undergone reconstruction, and the pathways had been re-routed in the reprint of the original version, and Jack was learning there were various shortcuts and hidden tunnels he didn't recognize. Areas of Hiccup that perhaps he didn't know as well as he thought he did, because the other kept changing direction, and Jack was always lost without the faintest sense of it.\_

\_ "Why should I feel guilty?" Hiccup questioned, uncharacteristically insincere and unforgiving, as if she were being overdramatic instead of well within her rights of redirect. However, in Hiccup's mindâ€"it had just been Jackâ€"just his best-friendâ€"so why should he feel badly about that? He didn't recognize it as anything other than what'd it had always beenâ€"an exception to the rules. \_

\_ "Because you cheated on me," she spat, but the ghost-haired boy heard her voice crack. "How can you just have overlooked that?" she choked, growing angry and spiteful. "Seriously, Hiccup, what's gotten into you all of a sudden? You sound like \_\_\*\*Jack\*\*\_\_."\_

\_\*\*How ironic\*\*\_, the boy thought grinning, up until he heard Hiccup's voice drop, and readjust, suddenly thrown off.\_

\_ "Why would you say that?" he demanded, his tone dangerously even,

warning Astrid that she was walking on thin ice.\_

\_ "\_\_\*\*Ohmygod\*\*\_\_." The most fed up noise extended in her voice as she shattered the sheet, fearing falling through Hiccup no more than you would fear squashing a bug. "Is all this really about Jack," Disbelief filled her voice, "â€"\_\_\*\*again\*\*\_\_?" and irritation overrode the prolonged sympathy of what had evidently become a sore subject. "When are you going to stop living in the past? He's \_\_\*\*gone\*\*\_\_, Hiccup."\_

\_ And at that moment, Jack had neverâ€"once in his lifeâ€"wanted to punch a girl in the face so badly, so hard, and so unremorsefully, as when he heard those words fill the airâ€"almost bursting through the window that was already ajar, and freezing her to death right then and there. \_\_\*\*What right did she have? \*\*\_\_Jack's thoughts formed furiously; even if he hadn't just conveniently re-surfaced without her knowledgeâ€"what kind of person insults and denounces the memory of the deceased, all in the same sentence, straight to their best-friend's face? Although, it couldn't be helped, that a small part of Jack smiled too, hoping now that perhaps Hiccup hadn't quite forgotten him to the extent that he first thought.\_

\_ "Shut the hell up, Astrid!" A scarily forceful intonation escaped Hiccup's mouth, and didn't entertain even an opening for her remarks. "I already told youâ€"Jack is \_\_\*\*none\*\*\_\_ of your business."\_

\_ "Really?" she challenged, mustering her strength, "Because I knew him too you know, Hiccup? But I swear it's like you purposely refuse to move onâ€"and now you're going as far as trying to project him onto yourself?" This time Jack peered in long enough to see her gesture to the redhead's neck, "\_\_\*\*Real\*\*\_\_ classy."\_

\_ Hiccup's face twisted into a scowl, as offended as if she'd insulted him directly, "He wasn't like that."\_

\_ "Oh yeah, because I forgot how \_\_\*\*modest\*\*\_\_ Jack always was," she phrased sarcastically, rolling her eyes, "Give me a break, Hiccup." Then there was an intermediate pause. "Seriouslyâ€"what's wrong with you today," her voice broke again, giving way to the underlying emotions that not even Astrid could restrain, "The last time I talked to you, you were soâ€"soâ€"\_\_\*\*you\*\*\_\_, " she stressed. "Now you show up with \_\_\*\*that\*\*\_\_, and try shrugging it off like its nothing? Do you even remember what tonight was supposed to be about?" \_

\_Then there came the sound of crying, confused, crying that couldn't be clotted. \_

\_ And as Jack peered in once more, catching the sight of bright, cobalt blue eyes, all drenched in frustrated tears, combine with how Hiccup's eyes began to round and cloud against them so sincerelyâ€"suddenly he wondered if perhaps that's all the other boy had seen down in the ravineâ€"if all he'd been looking into were blue eyes that reminded him of herâ€"and suddenly he hated the color more than anythingâ€"hated the possibility that any intimacy had stemmed from the catalyst of another person who had truly instilled the desire in the first place. \_

\_ Hiccup's face had seemed unbearably torn in those few moments though, and couldn't for the life of him seem to muster the courage to respond, finally settling with the silence that seemed to dictate

the whole night anyways, and a whole new set of things he couldn't possibly explain to someone.\_

\_ "You told me you loved me," she strained her voice, "you told me you've never felt this way about \_\_\*\*anyone\*\*\_\_ before," and if those words hadn't already hurt Jack beyond recoverable belief, the last seven created such a deep fissure in his chest that did the trick. "We said that tonight was the nightâ€| " \_

\_ And that's when Jack left, flying so fast with the wind tearing through his hair and whirling around his body as if he were made from aerodynamic fiberglass, shooting so furiously through the pitch black sky, that he thought for a moment he may never stopâ€" thought for a moment that he'd rather be lost againâ€"lost and alone with no one to blame but himselfâ€|\_

He was going to sleep with herâ€"that's what she'd meant, and Jack couldn't get the idea out of his head long enough to catch his breathe. Hiccup was \_actually\_ going to have \_sex\_ with \_her\_â€"on more than just a whimâ€"or the sexually charged frustration of misunderstood feelingsâ€"this was something that had been planned. That had been communicated and discussed between them, although Jack couldn't answer the questions as to when and where it had come from, and it bothered him beyond reasonable belief.

After all, he'd paid close enough attention to Hiccup's whereabouts to keep up to date, but he'd always tried purposely to avoid any and all interactions the redhead had with Astridâ€" however, it just seemed too unlikely that he could have overlooked something as huge as this. How he couldn't have noticed that now they were more than an inconsistent series of on/off open ended explanationsâ€"that they were actually \_dating\_. This was official; this was real, and way too serious as of just now for Jack's liking.

When had all this happened? The lack of answers was killing him. When had he exhausted his own powers of adjustment over a subject he'd always been able to redirect and distract from? He knew it was never an easy process, \_but when did it get so hard? \_Jack sighed, drawing back to a similar scene.

\_Hiccup was walking up to him, all stupid and starry-eyed; while inconspicuous brown eyes were watching with annoyance, and even greater perplexity towards the bashful, ever-expanding smile that continued to widen and spread simultaneously across the other boy's face. \_

\_Stopping in front of Jack, with an almost child-like sense of urgency and delight, Hiccup was beaming proudly. "You'll never guess what happened," he confided in the brunette excitedly, but for once, Jack wasn't so eager to share the news.\_

"\_Oh, I don't know," he studied his fingernails disinterestedly. "Did Astrid breathe the same \_\_\*\*air\*\*\_\_ as you again?" He feigned shock and awe, so sick of the stupid stories that didn't ever mean anything; but Hiccup simply smiled widerâ€"if that we're even \_\_\*\*possible\*\*\_\_. \_

"\_No," he blushed shyly, so self-consciously that Jack couldn't help but be drawn forward as the other shrank into a smaller smile, and glanced up all soft-spoken, "She kissed me."\_

â€|\_\*\*not the answer I was expectingâ€|\*\*\_\_Jack thought slowly, and somehow saddened; emotionlessly engaging Hiccup directly this time, instead of his nail-beds. "And did a chorus of angels come down from the heavens?" he inquired in the most breathy sarcasm, "While all the little woodland creatures gathered around you in song?"\_

"\_\*\*Hah-hah\*\*\_\_, very funny," Hiccup rolled his eyes flatly as the sparkle faded almost effortlessly beneath the unreceptive response, "You don't have to be so sarcastic about it, Jack."\_

\_The brunette smiled angelically, "And you don't have to be such a little bitch," he widened his eyes in an evidentially accusatory eye roll, and coated his voice in an even thicker sarcasm. \_

"\_Oh, shut up," Hiccup waved him off; Jack's comments proving ineffectual, much to his dismay, against the irritatingly obnoxious grin that resurfaced. "Don't be a dick just because you're jealous."\_

"\_Yeah," Jack stated outwardly, "I always \_\_\*\*did\*\*\_\_ fantasize about making out with a girl who's more muscular than I amâ€" Jack slung a sarcastically flamboyant arm against his hip, "What a turn on!"\_

\_Hiccup tipped his head observantly, running emerald eyes around the tighter black shirt outlining the brunette's abdomen. "So, by more muscular than youâ€"you mean, not at all?" he inquired with a mischievous smile.\_

"\_Look who's talking Douche-Bo-Baggins," Jack redirected playfully, before taking on a continuously light hearted tone, accompanied by the characteristic narrowing of his eyes. "Besides," he protested, "I'll have you know that I've got a lot of muscles," Jack winked, "And none of them are very small."\_

"\_Bahh-bumm-chhhh," the redhead mimicked the motion of drums, proceeding as he steadied the imaginary cymbal. "Ehâ€" he posed doubtfully, allowing his green eyes to slip into another emphasized double-take, "Well, you're overcompensating just a little, aren't you now?"\_

"\_Ouch," Jack held his chest. "Way to take a cheap shot."\_

"\_Well," Hiccup began to pose playfully, seeming to have abandoned all thoughts of Astrid at this point, as Jack watched him construct the sentence flawlessly in his head before releasing it innocently, with a smile Jack had never seen before, "I thought we were speaking strictly below the belt?"\_

\_God damn it\_, Jack groaned inwardly in aggravation, even more turned on by the memory than he had been by the central focus of "sex" in the first placeâ€"and almost even more aroused at how he'd noticed something in the pastime that hadn't been there before. How a few years agoâ€"it would have been considered completely normal, with no ulterior implications whatsoever; but now looking back on it, Jack couldn't help but place that quirky, unfamiliar smirk next to the one Hiccup had displayed, in a rather perfected version, just a few hours ago. Feeling his stomach muscles tighten and compress, fluttering

just enough to make him shiver when he realized they were identical.

Although no matter how shamelessly he could've shirked into the guilty pleasure of indulging on such open-ended fantasies, Jack couldn't seem to shake the skeptical feeling that all that had transposed between them back in the ravine had been insincere. That all Hiccup had seen was a boy he'd known forever, who's new bright blue eyes and ghost-white hair had reminded him so much of someone elseâ€¦

After all, it makes perfect sense. Jack rubbed the back of his neck embarrassedly, doesn't it? He was already planning to fuck her, icy eyes narrowed and phrased the act crudely to devoid it of significance, so maybe he was just too wound up to waitâ€¦ Jack sighed, wishing it made more and less sense at the same time, knowing you didn't just interchange your preferences from women to men at your own sexual convenience; but then inconclusively contradicted the statement with the fact that he himself had sprouted such a similar impulse, unpredictably, towards a certain emerald-eyed boy that had become far from dismissive.

Gripping his staff tightly, willing the snow to fall in place of the emotions he'd exhausted himself beyond expressing, Jack let the fragile flakes encase him in a calming contrast; continuing to clench the intricate, wooden structure more vulnerably as it became invariably saddening that he couldn't even remember when things had started to change between them anymore.

How did we go from best-friends to \_\_\*\*this\*\*\_\_? He wondered with a long-winded sigh.

It seemed like so long ago, and it seemed like it'd all happened so fast that it started to upset him how unsure he really was of it. How uncertainly he attempted to obtain the legitimacy of Hiccup's feelings, or lack there of.

The idea, in general, was hard enough to admit even to himself, and the possibility that his friend may never return his feelings continuously crashed and broke off still-frames of Astrid. Every time he got this much close to convincing himself it had to mean more, the more prominently her shade weighed in upon them to remind him she'd come firstâ€¦that she'd still meant more.

However, even when Jack swallowed his pride, in attempts to stomach that there was an equally able possibility it meant absolutely nothingâ€¦she was still there in the back of Jack's mind, laughing and smirking, while she shook her head realistically, asking, "Well, what else did you really expect?"

As if it was common knowledge that Jack was a substandard, waste of time, who no one should take seriously. She'd insinuated so enough earlier, from what he'd overheard, and the boy grew increasingly restless as the sky began producing a surplus.

It was just too much and there were too many loose ends that Jack had lost sight of which to tie together, and which to cut loose. Or which suspicions to let die and which concerns to rightfully harbor. But he was losing the arguments against himself, and finally forced his focus away from his own thoughts for awhileâ€¦they're terribly one

sided, he sighed despondently, beginning to ball up a fist of snow in his hands.

"Have I ever told you what a terrible artist you are?" Hiccup asked, encircling the snowman with scrutiny, "this doesn't even look like me a **little** bit."

"Hey, Hiccup," Jack interrupted from somewhere on the ground, where he sat smoothing out the curves of his creation. "Remember what happened after Hitler got rejected from art school?"

"Ugh, yeah! I remember hearing about it in class," he stated confusedly, as his eyes found Jack with a where-the-hell-are-you-going-with-this spiral of features. "Why?"

"Because," Jack pushed himself to his feet, "You're about to be on the receiving end of that rejection letter if you don't back off my masterpiece in a second."

"Woww," Hiccup extended his sarcasm extra sarcastically, while shaking his head in vicarious embarrassment. "Did you seriously just make a joke about **repeating** the **Holocaust**?" he stared blankly.

Jack rolled his eyes at the level of literal understanding he couldn't always breach, and began to gesture figuratively as his hands rose and fell with the implications in his voice. "Oh, 'cause I was really **serious** about reenacting mass genocide," the brunette feigned, "I mean 'Heil Hitler' they sure got it right," he snapped his fingers in conclusion, "What a stand up citizen **he** turned out to be!"

Hiccup sent a sloppy snowball at Jack's head as he was finishing, "Must you always be so sarcastic?" he eyes the other annoyed.

"Depends," Jack offered, "If I stop then will you stop being the Factual Fuhrer?"

"You know, Jack," Hiccup's face mirrored a slight disturbance, "I'm starting to wonder if you don't have some demented man crush on one of history's most disturbing dictators."

"Man-crush?" Jack burst with offense, before catching the joke, and playing along. "Clearly, you don't know my type at all," he shook his head in mock-disappointment. "I mean! Adolf?" his hand wavered as if to weigh the thought, "Eh! not my first choice! Now Mussolini," both arms pulled overhead in a stretch, "Gimmy-some-ah-that!"

Hiccup grinned at Jack's antics, which were over-dramatic and taken way too far as usual. "You're seriously going to hell, I hope you know that."

"Well, I'd certainly hope so," Jack looked over his shoulder, "I made the reservations like **forever** ago."

"You would," Hiccup rolled his eyes, "You **would**."

"\_Don't go trying to make me feel bad for planning in advance."\_

\_Hiccup's eyes fell over Jack's in that conflicting sort of constricting though, the way he always did when there was something else he was obviously refocusing around; carefully dissecting the thought as a ring of green continued eclipsing unevenly with the expansion, and lack here of, of blackâ€"introspectively debating whether or not to voice his distraction, or keep it unraveling and reconstructing in his own head.\_

\_It didn't take Jack long to catch onto the look encasing him thoughtfully, or the playful atmosphere that had fallen into Hiccup's unflinching seriousness; the kind of stare that caused Jack to sigh knowingly, and abandon all notions of derision. "Okay, Hic, what is it this time?"\_

"\_Ohâ€"I don't know," the auburn haired boy stumbled, suddenly embarrassed at being placed in the center of attention. "I was just thinking that's all."\_

"\_Yeahâ€"way too muchâ€"about whatever I last said," Jack summarized with accuracy. "I'm not Astrid here," he slipped in, not fully grasping why it developed spitefully, "I actually recognize when you start doing all your awkward, Hiccup-isms."\_

"\_Hiccupisms?" the other cracked a smile, "Did you just think of that now?"\_

\_Jack shrugged, "Yeah, I can turn a mean phrase," he waved off dismissively, "but did you honestly think I'd let you get away with changing the subject?"\_

"\_No, not honestly," Hiccup sighed, while transitioning into a groan-like protest, "but I hate when you call me out like that."\_

"\_Well," Jack stated in all fairness, "I'm not too crazy about you staring at me for ten minutes at a timeâ€"ever think of that?"

\_

\_And then to the brunette's surprise, and slight confusion, the bridge of Hiccup's nose took on the faintest emergence of color.

\_

"\_I'm not \_\_\*\*staring\*\*\_\_ at you," the smaller boy corrected Jack with a certain, unnecessary force that gave him pause. "I told you, I'm thinking, stupid."\_

"\_Stupid?" Jack asked, suddenly wondering if he'd said something to offend the other.\_

"\_Just drop it," his intonation fluctuated between discomfited and dismissive as the color rose in his face when anxious emerald eyes noticed Jack approaching.\_

\_However, the inconsistent pitch, as well as the unfamiliar phenomenon of seeing Hiccup burn up in the face over anything that wasn't Astrid or mortifyingly embarrassing, had been more than enough reason for Jack to disengage the distance. \_

"\_Are you alright?" he scratched behind his ear, growing slightly fidgety when he felt the other's eyes lift from the ground, along the length of his body, and then struggle to look Jack in the eyes.\_

\_However, no more then a second after the taller boy began to reach gingerly out towards his shoulder, did Hiccup slip backward with a rushed, and insincere excuse of having to be somewhere else; before awkwardly and practically running back in the direction of home.\_

\_Jack simply stood thereâ€"blanklyâ€"unsureâ€"and with the strangest heart beat that he could feel in his stomach instead of his chest. \_\_\*\*What a tweak,\*\*\_he stressed to himself, trying to fathom how their conversation had faltered and then fallen apart so directionless. \_\_\*\*Was it something I said?\*\*\_ He asked himself, almost bringing his shoulders into an unsure shrug, as if Hiccup were still across from him, and Jack were asking it aloud.\_

\_He couldn't trace the conversation back to any sensible trigger, no more then he could dissuade the curious combination of nerves and concern washing over him all at once. Hiccup may have certainly been a little shy, Jack knew that, and even prone to be a little jumpy when ill-at ease, \_\_\*\*but it's just not like him to run off like that.\*\*\_ Jack frowned, unsure of what to make of the unfamiliarly flushed face that disappeared as the back of the redhead's shirt faded into the distance.\_

\_The visual was transposing with the rest though, and creating an unfamiliar tension that offset chocolate, brown eyes; disrupting the precedent that lacked the experience to deal with this. I mean, he'd known Hiccup nearly all his life, so it wasn't like he'd never seen him act like that before; but it was the first and only time that the reaction had been directed towards Jack. \_

\_And he had no idea where it came from, and was even less certain what it implied; but it left him nervously voicing his thoughts aloud, turning towards the snowman, shaped in the smaller boy's likeness with a sigh. \_

"\_Something I should know about?"\_

Shaking the images, but not the uncertainty, Jack stared at the current recreation beneath his cold, clammy hands. The imagery had developed more accurately over time, and Jack's recent, natural skill with snow almost brought the likeness of Hiccup to life, but it was still an empty attempt to substitute the loneliness with something that wasn't really there. Something that would never make a sound, and suddenly Jack was craving such a noiseâ€"his eardrums growing drunk off the expression of Hiccup's voice that he'd only now realized he'd gone hours already without.

Scolding himself anxiously, as the proximity between his footfalls got increasingly closer to Hiccup's house, Jack couldn't help but notice that he was ten times more nervous then when he'd waited for his friend to finally see him. Instead, this was a different sort of anxiousnessâ€"an unplannedâ€"and unpredictable sort of movement that pulled him forward, despite the fact he had no idea what he was going to say.



This whole "excursion"â€"in its entirety, had been an act of both desperation and spontaneity; lacking all concept of structure and direction. A thousand things circulated in his head as Jack over speculated each of them until they lost the importance of vocalizing; soon finding himself stuck with the simple question of how he was supposed to even go about entering the Haddock residence now that he was no longer undetected.

In theory, it was such a miniscule, little detailâ€"a seemingly inconsequential inconsistency, but Jack had allowed it to spiral, branching unpredictably in a hundred different directions. Bouncing back and forth between whether or not he may walk in to find Astrid with Hiccup (or even worseâ€"in bed with Hiccup)â€"and how exactly he'd explain himself when it became unspoken, but presented that Jack lacked all hesitance towards simply inviting himself insideâ€"like he did it all the timeâ€"because he **\*\*did\*\*** do it all the timeâ€|

His lips wavered reflectively as the routine seemed less like a normalcy, and more like a creepily, invasive gesture; not to mention a deliberate violation of privacy and personal space. Several things Jack knew his friend was very particular about; the realization rendering his limbs paralyzed with an inability to proceed when Hiccup's reaction became increasingly hard to pin-point or predictâ€"leaving Jack in a nervous bout of conflict with himself.

How would the other react to the knowledge that Jack had been there the whole time? How "normal" would he think all of this was when he'd never know for certain, without asking for a complete memory-log, all the actual things Jack had witnessed without his awareness or consent? He'd never really stopped to consider beforeâ€"how personal of a space a bedroom isâ€"how intimate and exposingâ€"or how thoughtlessly he'd just come and gone as he pleased.

Jack sighed, staring more uncertainly at the back door than ever. It's not like he'd ever intentionally seen anything he shouldn't haveâ€"or watched Hiccup undress or anything weird like that; but does it really matter?\_ He thought retrospectively, and felt no more assured when he realized that only the other boy could truly answer thatâ€"an answer that could either embolden him, or shoot him down in a single series of opposing extremes in opinion.

Stepping backward, Jack gripped both hands awkwardly around his staff, positioning the object between himself and the house as if to hide behind itâ€"as if to disappear once again behind the force-field that refused to revoke the clause of object permanence he'd granted Hiccup.

Grumbling and muttering incoherently, Jack began a prolonging pacing around the yard, consistent with the figure-eight of footprints beneath his own, tracing the symmetry with endless repetitions while the chambers of his heart created cardiac collisions, and struggled to circulate any warmth-any feeling-towards the actions he'd just a day ago, been under the impression, were kind and loving.

Now, however, he was clotting with this overwhelming and unexplainable sense of guilt as it swam through depths of embarrassment, and then solidified into inadequacy and disgustâ€"his train of thought derailing and losing all fluid motion as Jack

attempted to secure the wheels on some attuned type of track; some progressive counterpart that matched the unique energy that had driven Jack in the pastâ€”some simple connection that established the logic was still compatible on a functional level outside of his own convoluted brain.

Nothing helped thoughâ€”it's not like this would become easily avoidable once they were togetherâ€”because there were only a very few, select things bound to come up in conversation; and this was beyond a doubt, one of them.

Jack's whole face burned, heated at the eventual and perceivably unpredictable inevitabilityâ€”but howâ€”how could he ever possibly tell Hiccup that he'd spent almost more than half of his time, over the course of three years, following at his heelsâ€”when merely confessing he loved him had put the shy boy on edge?

How could he ever convey, non-creepily, that he'd spent hours just watching him sleep, just to be near him? Jack posed realistically, as all the specificity caused the innocence to translate into \_to-catch-a-predator-like \_and stalkerish in his mind now.

\_Like, what is this anyways?\_ Jack thought contrastingly, with revulsion in his features\_â€”fucking, Twilight?\_

Was he supposed to be the socially awkward, sparkling, immortal creeper who patrolled around the object of his affection as they slept!?

"Oh \_god\_, " Jack groaned, draining into an even ghostlier shade of white than he already was to begin with. "Calling \_Team Edwardâ€”\_go \_fuck\_ yourself," he cursed so unpleasantly, and forcefully, unable to deny how accurately his sarcastic commentary turned satirical and scarily identifiable.

Although, sparking just a bit of lost confidence, in the immature depth of Jack's brain, all he could do was picture Astrid as the other oneâ€”\_the psycho wolf one with roid-rage,\_ Jack specified to himself when the name escaped him, unable to stop laughing inwardly to himself in such a cocky, confident slightâ€”\_hahahâ€”I \_\_\*\*win\*\*\_\_ bitch!\_

Promptly after the thought's formulation, the inward laughter trailed away, "Anddd now you're really taking this too far," he sighed helplessly.

"â€|are youâ€|standing outside my houseâ€|talking about, Twilightâ€|?" Hiccup was leaning in the doorway, half amused half emotionally disturbed, "All by yourself, at eleven o'clock at night?"

Within a heart beat, Jack went from white to blood red, trying not to vocally acknowledge that he had indeed said some of those things aloud.

The other boy's grin grew at the evident lack of willingness to contribute, coaxing on chidingly, "I \_do\_ believe I heard a 'Team Edward' in there," he stepped out from the doorway, and made his way over to the other. "How dedicated of you to pick sides, Jack."

"I was speaking figuratively," the pallor boy muttered, "I didn't know you could \_hear \_me."

"Well you did pick a pretty crappy place to try and avoid me," Hiccup rationalized, "I've been watching you for like ten whole minutes."

Spheres of aquamarine fell into cold palms as Jack buried his face out of sight, hoping both to conceal and thaw the coloration. "Just when I thought the world couldn't be \_anymore\_ cruel!" Jack exclaimed in a complaining outburst, combing his already offsetting logic with the idea Hiccup had watched him pace like a crazy, pulling his face into all sorts of unflattering self-speculative faces, and occasionally drawing verbal connections to "literally\_ the most unforgivably embarrassing movie a teenage boy could ever compare their life to.

"Well—at least you're here now," Hiccup cleared his throat, and spoke up, turning halfway awkward and halfway shy at the intentional shift in conversation, abandoning a more playful discourse for the immediate introduction of a more personal atmosphere.

For a second, Jack forgot about the rest, and was too wrapped up in how edible and adorable the other looked a few feet away that brought the angle of his smile up into a genuine degree. "So, you going to invite me inside?" he asked softly, evoking an even shyer sound in response.

"I thought it was implied."

\_\*\*\_.\_.\_.\_\*\*\_

\_\*\*sorry...i'm such a dick for ending it like this\*\*\_

\_\*\*i'm just lazy lol and already wrote too much\*\*\_

\_\*\*HOWEVER;\*\*\_

\_\*\*pwees review anyways\*\*\_

\_\*\*AND REMEMBER;\*\*\_

\_\*\*I am treating you to SOMETHING deliciously HiJack in the next chapter,\*\*\_

\_\*\*not sure what nec. but i'll think of something :)\*\*\_

## 12. Chapter 12

\*\*\_FIRST OF ALL: \*\*

\*\*\_I hope everybody had A Merry Christmas! \_or I should probably say...A Happy Holiday! in case for, whatever religious or anti-commercialism reasons you may have for not celebrating it; haha good, couldn't decide if it would be considered offensive to just assume everyone acknowledges Christmas...so I got nervous and wrote all this pointless crap afterwards lol.\_\_\*\*

**\*\*\_okay. REGARDLESS;\_\*\***

**\*\*\_I hope it's been a good year and a great holiday for everyone! And that those of you on winter break are enjoying the freedom from school to read fan fiction all day, every day of course! lol and that for those of you do the whole Christmas thing, that duh, you all got ROTG presents out the wazoo.\_\*\***

**\*\*\_\_bahah; I say this becauseeeee my sister and I definitely got like...ALL Rise of the Guardian themed presents...and my older brother was like, "wtf is wrong with you guys." haha but not gonna lie-got the video game and also a scarf my sister made me that looks like jack's sweatshirt-and I was ridiculously happy.\_\_\*\***

**\*\*\_\_plus-like-what? i was the best big sister ever for getting my younger sister cardboard cutouts of Jack and Bunny that are now adorning her room...where I visit them shamelessly at least once a day bahah (originally it supposed to be Hijack till she switched up her pairings, but ohwell)\_\_\*\***

**\*\*\_\_SECOND OF ALL;\_\*\***

**\*\*\_yessss! \*feels really accomplished\* \_this update took foreverrrrrr, but it was one of those chapters that had to be perfect, \_and after nitpicking through every last line slash rewriting it eight hundred times because I was scrutinizing the placement of every teeny, tiny word-I think it's pretty close :) lol in terms of delivery at least.\_\_\*\***

**\*\*\_^ however, this could just be because it's seven am and I haven't slept yet because I was too busy trying to get this posted...dedication? or insanity? I'm not totally sure myself hahah.\_\*\***

**\*\*\_ANYWHO;\_\*\***

**\*\*\_now, don't go expecting doves to fly out of the screen or anything lol, \_but YES; I did keep my promise by making it a happier chapter-lol I cannot however promise that it means none of it will be sad-but give it a chance so the hijack moments can change your mind :)\_\*\***

**\*\*\_whiiiich, hopefully they will-and hopefully you will all love it! or at least not hate it. \_\*\***

**\*\*\_haha good, can you guys tell my brain is no longer functioning from these senseless fragments btw?\_\*\***

**\*\*\_IN LIGHT OF THIS; \_\*\***

**\*\*\_let's get down to comment reviews\_\*\***

**\*\*\_(before morgan over here forgets how to form full sentences)\_\*\***

**\_\*\*SPskater411:\*\*\_lol I really love that you never login btw because that's totally something I would do because I'm a bum lol. I am, however, so glad that you loved that last chapter-because I was freakishly uncertain of it for some reason-however, I'm glad the**

flashbacks accented it in a way that gave way to an enhanced perspective-I def. expected to use a lot more before I got to this particular chapter; so it's good to hear that they served their purpose well! and merry christmas to you as well! lol maybe this chapter can count as a belated gift!\_\_

\_\*\*AnnoCat: \*\*hell, yeah! Being An Exception to the Rules: an actual award that I won in eight grade haha-and now I have more proof to back it up! lol but I'm honestly flattered that my writing had the ability to break habit in your routine, or that you thought it was good enough to! hahah GOOD, and for some reason when I read the "to my heart, my mind, my body, and my fucking face..." ALL I could picture was the fic popping out of the screen in like a full on attack of times-new-roman hahah. lol sorry, that definitely was probably way more amusing in my head then it's gonna be to read; but ANYWHO-like I said; so, so flattering. haha for real, the amount of psychological and emotional damage I feel like i've caused with this fic is ACTUALLY kind of alarming-i always read these reviews like "OHMYGOD, I'M SO SORRY. HOLY SHIT. I'M AN ASSHOLE. IT'LL ALL BE OKAY, I PROMISE!" Ahhh, so hopefully you've had enough time to recover before I most likely do it all over again...but come on, who doesn't love the whole tortured-agnst thing? I mean we're shipping a DEAD kid for heavens sake-we were practically ASKING for it lol  
><em>

\_\*\*^ \*second comment\* \*\*OH GREAT; haha I scroll to the next thing to review to read that you 'jumped out the window' haha i was like NO! I just tried to apologize for this psychological hell of a fanfic! baha; well thanks again! especially for the multiple reviews so far. and enjoy this next chapter; hopefully it will be happy-making.

><em>

\_\*\*little guy called Mars: \*\*hmm; well I can't decide if you're trying to say that you just don't like the way that he's currently acting in the story-or if it's specifically my adaptation of his character as a whole lol-so, if it's the former-then let me agree by saying heeee is kind of how you say? A dick. however that was intentional-if it was the latter-then i really don't know what else to say other than I'm sorry that you weren't able to get into the portrayal I chose. any who; if you continue to read this, I hope it gets better with the progression of the plot-and if not; then thanks still for the review and the feedback!  
><em>

\_\*\*Danielle: \*\*awe, shucks. so simple and so ridiculously flattering haha it's so funny how a few words can make me smile so wide at my computer screen like a crazy. And I don't know if it's the BEST, but I'm glad you think it's good enough to even be considered! Not everyone really goes for the whole 'in-depth analysis crap' or even the 'wax-poetic details'-so I'm ever appreciative of the readers who come along, and not only DEAL with it, but actually LIKE it lol because it's pretty much the only way I know how to write. And yes; oh god; the angst; it's so intoxicating; I really can't say I love anything more than two boys fully of pent up frustration; it's almost disgusting how amazing it really is. (good, angst in general not my writing bahaha i just realized i probably potentially sounded like a dick right there! lol) But YES; glad you're liking it-cause I really have tried to intertwine the right proportions of seriousness and sarcasm enough to downplay the saddening parts, and project a more

realistic, full scale scenario while still making it all make sense. so yeah; i'm rambling; gonna shut up now; hope you enjoy the next installment!  
><em>

\_\*\*Jamaican Skull: \*\*damn it; the police are gonna break down my door sooner or later demanding why so many people are spontaneously dying after visiting my fan fiction page-haha, but no really, thanks so much-it continues to blow me away that people are getting so into this fic that it's to the point that it gets under their skin-lol as a writer this is a most promising accomplishment! and truthfully, the fact that you CAN'T put it into words is what makes this review awesome lol because, for me at least, it's that moment where some shit totally catches me off guard and for once I draw this total blank like I just got mindfucked so hard I can't think straight. yes, well, I'm sure you got my point without me needing to explain it eight hundred diff. ways-I tend to do this a lot I'm realizing lol-so sorry about that; thanks for the review!; and here's chapter twelve! hope it's to your liking!\_

\_\*\*animefreakg: \*\*ahh okay, okay, thank you for backing up my concerns about that last chapter, i'm not sure why I was so nervous about it but I was like, hovering over the 'submit' button with my mouse the whole time like SHOULD I!? haha acting more like I was defusing a bomb than posting a chapter. and also; thank you, because I know everyone doesn't always like the cliffhangers; but they're my favorite, so I love to see other people loving them too-all my ending notes. however, no, I did not see that it was up! (I have this terrible knack for being obliviously unaware of things lol not to mention forgetful) so thanks for letting me know! i'll be sure to read it/review soon!  
><em>

\_\*\*Anonymous: \*\*awe :( i'm sowwwyyy-not gonna lie though, it is pretty sad, and is supposed to be to achieve the right setting/effect; however even I'm not cruel enough to leave it that way forever, but I can't promise that means it'll get unbearably happy the whole time either :/ the whole 'disconnection' vibe is sort of thematic and so there is an element of sadness that runs through out the whole plot-but I can promise that it's not ALL going to be so fucking depressing haha-the first chapters were the worst for that; and these more recent ones are starting the reversal. Soo, thank you for the review! I hope if you decide to read on that you'll be convinced to keep reading; but if not thanks for even considering to read as far as you did AND leave a review to something you weren't even sure you wanted to finish. props for the dedication.\_

\_\*\*darkoc3an:\*\* yeah, so, I totally didn't see your review until I had already written this chapter; so I was like "good thing your wish is about to be granted," bahah because when writing this chapter-I myself was like OKAY, MORGAN get the fuck down to what everybody, including yourself, wants to read! aka duh; the hijack moments. And as of now, they've been set into motion; although bear with me because there's more to my plot than simply a romance-there are more elements to tie in-however they all draw back on their relationship-so it all coexists-and will intertwine throughout the developments. I try my best to balance out the scenes though; so I hope you find this chapter to be a peace offering of sorts! dvdsdjfvdsdjf okay, yeah, sorry, my brain is so fried right now; sorry

if this comment totally bombed in terms of sense-making lol. and let me wrap this up by saying thanks for the review, and I hope you like the next chp.!\*\*  
><strong>\_

\_\*\*-.--.-.-.-\*\*\_

\_\*\*Okay; so the only two things I can thing to make a note of are\*\*\_

\_\*\*1. towards the end there will be like big chunks of the scene all smashed together in bigger paragraphs-that will contain both Jack/Hiccup's dialogue without the clearer designations/paragraph breaks-it's pretty inferable once you get to it , as far as who's saying what-I just want to clarify that I did it like that specifically because it's supposed to be like it's all happening at once-too fast to catch a breath between let alone appear organized, and I felt breaking apart just ruined that overall effect. hopefully that makes sense. if not, ohwell just read it!  
lol\*\*\_

\_\*\*AND\*\*\_

\_\*\*2. reviews, pees :)\*\*\_

\_\*\*\*don't look at me like that...YOU ALL KNEW IT WAS COMING!\*\*\*\_

\_\*\*...\*\*\_

\_\*\*\*Ahem\*\*\*\_

\_\*\*\_\*\* WITHOUT FURTHER ADIEU;\*\*\_\*\*\_

\_\*\*\_\*\*ladies and gents-\*\*\_\*\*\_

\_\*\*\_\*\*may I present you with chapter twelve.\*\*\_\*\*\_

\_\*\*a humble token of hijack bridging moments  
3\*\*\_

\_\*\*teehee...\*\*\_

\_\*\*-.--.-.-.-.\*\*\_

\_\*\*chapter twelve.\*\*\_

"So," Jack inquired, lacking any and all ability to ignore the subject, "how was your \_date?"\_

The other boy frowned, "You just \_had\_ to dive right in, \_didn't\_ you?"

\_Like you would have even brought it up if I hadn't...\_

Being in Hiccup's room was weird though-definitely the farthest thing from normal as the winter reincarnate tried hopelessly to isolate his previous thoughts and experiences into single, separate ideas. But his big, stupid mouth had opened instead, and he'd already said all the wrong things again. \_Nothing like a few Twilight references to

throw off all continuity right?\_ he considered spitefully, now wishing he'd never walked all the way back out here in the first place.

"Well, it's \_kind\_ of important."

Hiccup retorted stubbornly, "You forgot \_complicated."\_

\_"Oh?"\_ Jack grinned at the dramatic irony. "Why? Did she not like my welcoming home present?" He asked, drawing his body closer to flick the perfectly purpled space on other's neck.

"No," the smaller boy blushed out of spite, "it's not \_exactly\_ her style."

"Not my fault you look better on me," Jack offered, shrugging in amusement.

"She's \_really\_ fucking mad at me, Jack," he scowledâ€"causing the mark to disappear beneath his grasp as he rubbed it ineffectually. "This isn't supposed to be funny."

"Well, excuse me if I really\_ don't\_ care," the immortal intentionally dismissed as he began to pace, purposely disengaging eye contact while he readjusted uncomfortably to the atmosphere of the other's room.

"Of \_course\_ you don't," Hiccup echoed, as if it were no surprise, "How could you \_possibly\_ care about anyone other than yourself?"

"Look who's talking," Jack caught the hostility, as well as the fraction of truth that went with itâ€"deciding he was unsure of any degree of offense towards it when the words had instilled no immediate emotion in his chest. His mind, however, illuminated with instantaneous parallels of thought.

Was it happening all over again? Were they falling back into the disruption? Or had it ever, even truly stopped?

\_"You **\*\*seriously\*\*** expect me to believe that?" his eyes narrowed, \_taking note of the shitty excuse-for-an-excuse that Hiccup had left between themâ€"unappreciative of its placement.\_\_

\_ The other swallowed, \_"Why shouldn't you?" \_unaware that a division had begun to distance them; and that conversation was becoming lost in-between the uncharacteristic cracks in their friendship that had begun to form fissures. Divisions from which they could not run.\_

\_ It had been approximately a week since Astrid kissed himâ€"since Hiccup had shown that unfamiliar smileâ€"and since both had misplaced the full extent of emotion in Jack's chest. Something was\_\_ different. Something shifting in the finely tuned frequencies, and the unusual wavelengths that were going straight through them indefinitely and unnoticed on the surface level were beginning to radiate and reveal the damage.\_

\_ "Because you're lying **\*\*straight\*\*** to my face," Jack bit off spitefully, leaving Hiccup to chew on the rest of it. \_\_**\*\*Is this the fourth, or the fifth time that he's canceled our plans? \*\***\_\_He



considered while emerald eyes engaged the ground in a heated starting contest; brown eyes narrowing more sharply into the lack there of, in color across from him, wondering if his friend could feel them falling all over his body. Outlining every inch of Hiccup in attempts to will the contact he was refusing.

The response mumbled under the pressure of unreceptive auras encasing him fixedly. "I just forgot, that's all..."

"\*\*Right.\*\*" Jack folded his arms across his chest, establishing this insecure sort of dominance that blurred superiority and defensiveness indiscernibly, "Let me guess" conveniently after Astrid asked you to do something?"

"\*\*He's so guilty he can't even hide it.\*\*"

Helplessly, hopelessly redirecting, the other stumbled, "Can't you even pretend to be supportive?" Hiccup looked up such a pained confusion in his eyes.

"Of what?" Jack asked forcefully. "Of her changing you?" His eyebrow rose incredulously while his lips folded into each other to form a scowl—the kind of expression that strained every facial muscle trying not to look so sad; while at the same time, willing away a smirk, evidently both offended and amused. However, internally, Jack harbored quite the opposite reaction against this imbalance that had stolen all sensibility.

All clarity.

Ten years and nothing had ever been like this between them—they had never been this tense—this secretive—had never caused either of them to hide inside themselves so involuntarily. The distance, however, was growing regardless of their acknowledgement or their consent, and the differences were beginning to surface—revealing an even bigger difference in the way they were starting to feel about it.

Feeling without knowing.

Becoming strangers.

Disconnected.

Lost.

"I'm not changing," Hiccup's intonation dropped sadly, yet inconclusively as the words extended almost questioningly—devoid of any discernable punctuation.

"I think the fact that you don't even realize it, is proof enough that you are."

"Jack, you're not being fair!"

"And you think you're doing any better?"

Struggling to set his features in sync with the words, Hiccup resulted in compromise—never one to feign such exaggerated ignorance towards the obvious truths.

\_Most of them at least.\_

\_ "Listen," he began falsely, "I know that I haven't exactly been around a lot latelyâ€|"\_

\_ "Try **\*\*n\*\***\_\_**\*\*ever\*\***\_\_," Jack interjected.\_

\_ "â€|but that doesn't mean that anything's gonna change between us," the usually inferior sound finished over him.\_

\_"Not \_\_**\*\*going\*\***\_\_ to?" \_\_he shook his head, "Hiccup\_\_\_\_\_, t\_\_\_\_hey already **\*\*have.**"\*\*\_

\_There was no way it wasn't true.\_

\_It was\_ finally\_ happening.\_

\_Hiccup may have not been able to see it yet; but she was rearranging him\_â€\_slowly infecting him with an illness that would become terminal if left untreated in its early stages. Seeping rapidly into his central nervous system and mimicking all the neurotransmitters with inorganic reactions to produce a loss of consciousness.

\_

\_Slowly, but surely. \_

\_The disease was spreadingâ€\_mutating his cognitive symmetry into this alter-egoâ€\_this selfish sense of carelessness and indecisionâ€\_all combined under the autopilot of a person he'd never been.\_

\_His father.\_

\_Losing his emotion to instinctâ€\_ignoring the long term gain for the short term solution\_â€\_and \_\_forgetting about the people he was stepping over each time they got in his wayâ€\_losing sight of how to treat them with anything other than avoidance after they'd become estranged within the divisions of duty...\_

\_Jack was losing him...\_

\_Time was **\*\*taking\*\*** him.\_

\_Age was stealing youth to the inevitability.\_

\_And Hiccup was falling victim to genetics.\_

\_Their chemistry was altering.\_

\_People were always changing though\_â€\_h\_e could have let it goâ€\_\_\_**\*\*should\*\***\_\_ of let it goâ€\_but it was different this time, and with a single kiss and total lack of effortâ€\_Astrid was already getting a side of Hiccup he'd never seen before.

\_

\_**\*\*Him\*\***\_\_â€\_Jackâ€\_the one who supposedly knew him better than anyoneâ€\_the one who'd gone through everything with him; every transitionâ€\_all the changes and all the turmoil.\_

\_\_\*\*He\*\*\_\_â€"who had picked up all Hiccup's pieces and then put him back together again when no one else couldâ€"when no one else had even \_\_\*\*tried\*\*\_\_â€"\_\_let alone Astrid.\_\_

\_If anything, she'd just amplified the extent of damageâ€"premeditated murderâ€"\_a repeat offense\_\_â€"\_guilty by association.\_\_

\_Etching and forming scars on the most sensitive tissueâ€"the kind that never fully healâ€"Jack would've thought the blows to Hiccup's heart would have reminded him who had \_\_\*\*really\*\*\_\_ been thereâ€"or at least been enough to dissuade him from losing so much to herâ€"so thoughtlessly.\_\_  
><em>\_

\_Enough to keep him from losing himself...\_

\_But the rest is catching up...\_Jack realized, stepping in, closing the space between them, and reducing it to nothing but a few footfalls. \_"Seriously, \_who even \_are\_ you anymore?"

Pressed together tightly, Hiccup's lips rolled beneath one another, and tucked inward to hide between clenched teethâ€"trying hard to suppress the hurt that pained his features.

Jack continued though, still nervous of creating a more expansive fissure, but knowing he'd lose all confidence if he denied the impulse, "'Cause I'm not the one who's being selfish anymore, Hic."

Then a pause.

"How is not knowing how to feel, \_selfish?"\_ the other met it with an argument. "I can't just \_take back\_ everything that's happened between her and I, okay?"

\_Everything?\_

Another pause.

"How long?" Jack asked suddenlyâ€"off topicâ€"out of breathâ€"and unable to stop how terribly saddened it sounded this time. "How long as it been going on?"

"On and off," Hiccup shrugged self-consciously, "for awhile now."

The other boy shrunkâ€"how could he have ever been so stupid? "Which meansâ€"| "

"Which means things have been really unclear."

"What about it?" Jack pressed on, unable to stomach the answer he already knew; and even more unable to admit why he knew it. "What is it about this that's making it so complicated? That you can't ignore it?"

Immediately, Hiccup's face became deeply flushed, flooding with mixtures of embarrassment and regretâ€"and Jack just hoped he wasn't too late.

"We've been like this for over a year now," Hiccup breathed "as controlled as he could without losing his voice to the resistance. "â€|it's been a long timeâ€|some subjects have become unavoidableâ€|," he stalled under indirect wording, "and she's tired of waiting, Jack."

\_You're not going to make this easy, are you?\_

The pale face in the other's gaze wavered from side-to-side with wide, prompting eyes that could hardly contain their discomfort. "Waiting \_toâ€|\_?"

Consequently, green eyes disappeared, sheltered behind lids, too clearly ashamed of the subject to share it so easily in such plain sight of the one person who would hate him the most for it. "To take things fartherâ€|\_us\_."

Jack recognized the familiar wording, and considered the deeper implications, coming closer again; constantly wanting to forget all the details, and sink shamelessly into the tension in place of the bigger picture they had yet to construct. "And what do \_you\_ want?"

"The same thingâ€|or at leastâ€|at least I \_thought\_ I did," he sighedâ€|in so deeply and out so rigidly that it was hooking Jack's breathing, anchoring his lungs in suspense, as he waited defenselessly to be reeled by the parting of Hiccup's lips. "But it's too complicated to just 'take back' nowâ€|not after I promised her we would..." the redhead paused for a lack of euphemismsâ€|of the duller phrases that could hope to isolate the already very much implied sensitivity of how personal this was.

Expansive blue eyes searched hopefully for a silver lining in the reflections of the scene he'd stormed away from earlier, but came up empty handed. Jack's body was inclining forward, but his feet were fixed to the groundâ€|his hands curling and uncurling into loose, incomplete fists that he strained to keep at his sides. "Can't you just tell her that you changed your mind?"

It almost seemed impossible that all of this had happened over the course of a single dayâ€|how could twenty-four hours possibly contain so many explosions? How could they blow up and still be standing? How could they give so much, and still get nothing back? Nothing but deeper doubts and shallower graves as they dug from one ditch to the nextâ€|accidentally beginning to unbury all those things they'd pushed off to the side.

"Not unless I have a death wish." Hiccup sighed at the ground, where his eyes were tracing the contrasting shades of grain, swirling in patterns of caramel and chestnut. "Plus I'm not entirely sure I want toâ€|tell her, that is," he specified. "I justâ€|I don't know how to trust myself when I can't even keep my own thoughts straight anymore."

Jack understoodâ€|"to an extentâ€|the difficulty of making a choice based on an unexplained impulseâ€|the untimely urge that goes against everything you've already been fighting so longâ€|where the truth becomes so twisted that you're forced to realize it has two forms.

What you know. And what you've decided.

Both of which blur together, coexisting under your own creation.

"I think," Jack spoke up, "that if she really cares about you, then it shouldn't matterâ€¦". He trailed off, falling into repetition when he felt he had more to sayâ€”more to force Hiccup to realize. "I think that if she really loves you...then she'd wait for you..."

The concept of waiting was stemming centripetally from the space on Jack's chestâ€”the one that was beating steady reverberationsâ€”the skeleton of that one, particular word echoing in the silence with no backbone left to support itâ€”and it was drawing Hiccup closerâ€”emerald eyes were swallowing the space, the ocean between them, the sea of separation and silence that was so ironically devoid of enough room to ignore how long Jack had...

Waited.

The connection between their awarenesses combine into a single train of thoughtâ€”intuitively understood as emerald auras began to dilate and refocus around the shadowy, depths of murky sea-blue eyes that were suffocating sight within a smoke screen that temporarily obscured, and threw off natural direction. Without the experience to see through the thick layer of shifting shades of grey, hands were forced to grope along the walls, unintentionally retracing the shape of such a familiar structure you've lost all sight of.

"Some feelings aren't the same as others," Hiccup whispered, inaudibly, eyes somewhere else, with words just cryptic enough that Jack couldn't decode where they had come from, to which cavernâ€”which depth of his being, or even what doorway the the other had undone the deadbolt to and broken down without lifting finger. "Sometimes that makes them harder to recognize."

And sometimes things were just intuitiveâ€¦

Jack answered without knowing whether it was the right one or not, no longer concerned with caution, no longer taking the time to think over what was coming to his lips so naturally. "They're still all there though," his eyes slipped to the floor, avoiding the indirect disclosure of his true feelings, "even if you're not sure what they mean."

"I know," Hiccup's shoulders dropped, constantly easing in and out of the illusion of normalcy whenever Jack's voice fell into soft, protective words that he couldn't help but swallow, "but I just couldn't tell her..." his eyes were extinguishing heartrendingly. "She came over, she cried, and I just couldn't say it to her face." He covered his own, pushing his fingers into to start of his hairline, and furrowing them disappointedly in tangles through strands of auburn. "I just stood there. She called me out. And I couldn't say anything."

Jack was so tempted, in that moment, to confess that he already knewâ€”to take the hit instead of letting Hiccup walk right into itâ€”from forcing him to relive it instead of forcing him to realize. Half of him felt so rotten on the inside for not being able to extend

his sympathies appropriately, and the other half was always so angry and so hurt that Hiccup had never been able to tell her. To defend Jack's importanceâ€”thus constantly reducing it until it seemed like there was nothing left. Blushing as the ideaâ€”the audacityâ€”in both its simplicity and its entiretyâ€”embarrassed him irreconcilably.

\_She already doesn't like they idea of us...\_

Pallor, almost two-toned lips of lifeless blue separated slowly, cracked and dryâ€”and the words felt even colder against themâ€”catching his shallow breathing as it collided visibly in the contrast of all the heat that left in his face, withdrawing at the sight of such tangible defectiveness in his ability to stay strong.

To keep it from breaking him down.

To keep it from freezing him in time.

In the seconds that were slipping between them

\_No wonder he couldn't tell her...\_

"You're scared of what she'll think of you," Jack said simply, so simply that it was smothering.

"Well you're not exactly giving me an easy ultimatum," Hiccup's tenor hitched and caught in frustration. "I mean, what did you \_expect\_ me tell her?" he asked, almost acrimoniously against the ensuing stressâ€”breaking between sarcasm and spite in a way that drew his friend's attention into the rapid progression of Hiccup in motion, dramatically gesturing out of steady form. "What could I \_honestly\_ have said, Jack?" Both hands rising and falling in sync with the outlandish and hypothetical tones, " \_'Sorry Astrid, I know I've loved you since literally forever, buuut I'd kind of rather fuck my dead-best-friend's ghost? Oh, no, my badâ€”only I can see him, but I like toototally promise it's not complete bullshitâ€”|soâ€”|rain check?'\_"

All of a sudden that space between their chests seemed to shrink, growing so small as Jack braced himself as best he could for the momentâ€”\_That awkward moment where I realize I'm two seconds away from doing something incredibly stupid...\_he thought, trailing off as his face rose slowly from the floor in a mixture of emotion.

"\_Fuck, \_huh?\_" Jack asked; Hiccup swallowed.

"Iâ€”|I was just speaking figuratively," the other turned scarlet, and stuttered the inconsistent inaccuracies so noticeably that neither could conjure comebacks or acts of compliance. No way to act in accordance with with the strange, overwhelming nature leftover from ever-changing shifts in the weather.

The lack of continuity they upheld.

\_This used to be so easy,\_ Jack's face fell ashamed, contradicting his earlier declarations of difficulty when they collided with how much harder it was now. Somehow innocence had been lost in the juxtapositionâ€”the luxury of being seen and not heard that no one

learned to appreciate until it was long goneâ€”until the shadows of child-like symmetry faded silentlyâ€”and finally required them to speak.

\_To take responsibility for our actionsâ€”for our recklessnessâ€”\_

Jack cleared his throat, clinging to the seventy-five percent certainty that the slip in Hiccup's speech had involuntarily revealed the root of conflict. The long list of things they shouldn't have done, and should never have kept to themselves.

"Would it make it any easier if I said that I've thought about it too?" The muscles in his legs pulled forward, but lost the calisthenics to cardiac paralysis, "If I told you I never want you to sleep with anyone unless it's me?"

\_\_Sometimesâ€”it's enough to just be honest,\_\_ \_he breathed, hoping that's what his answer would be\_â€”enough.\_

Impulsive and perhaps fatally jeopardizing, but it couldn't be helped. Sometimes you couldn't hide, even if it meant getting hurtâ€”and sometimes you had to \_get\_ hurt to know how much the pain was really worth. The steadfast or fleeting ability to hold your ground, because \_sometimes\_ you had to fightâ€”you had to defend your right to want something so badly...

Even if that meant giving up everything...

And Jack would've given all of it awayâ€”\_anything\_ to conquer the battle between themâ€”would take all the cuts and the bruises and the blows to his egoâ€”because he'd always been a soldierâ€”conditioned to follow, but born to survive. Rejection and defeat terrified him, and the onset of the ambush crashed around his body in conventional warfare, but even amidst the chaos and the ruinsâ€”Jack couldn't deny the call of dutyâ€”his one soul purpose in life, and afterâ€”

To protect.

So, he decided he would come with guns loaded, with a flash of artillery to draw Hiccup out and provoke the crossfireâ€”because he would rather take a bullet than be the one to pull the trigger. That was the beauty of being so well seasonedâ€”because soldiers knew how to marchâ€”veterans of the endless motion of warâ€”with the scars and the sutures of finely tuned steps of fight or flight responses. There was no fearâ€”but he was stupid not to be scaredâ€”your body could only take so much damage before the casualties became cognitive; and he had already lost his heart to the inevitability of experienceâ€”and it had long since been artificially replaced with a cold, shiny, purple one instead.

\_I have to remember the words\_, Jack reminded himself, because it meant nothing without an inscription, without the name he wore across his heart like a battle scar to sanctify the depth of its loss.

To remind him why he was still fighting.

Experience had made it perfectly clear, and his actions even clearerâ€”that he wasn't abandoning his post until the war had been wonâ€”until the casualties had reached their final count, and the

white-flags were wavingâ€”and he didn't care if he died all over again tryingâ€”because Jack had already proved his willingnessâ€”and he would sacrifice himself completely.

He would give up \_everything.\_

"Thanks for trying," Hiccup spoke with a surprising easiness, and an even quicker trigger fingerâ€”losing the present in exchange for the past as it shot familiarly, weaving in and out of the atmosphere in an endless projectile of the ties that would always bind them, "but you're already the reason this is so hard, Jack."

The first bullet had broken the skin, barely enough to draw blood, but the sight of circulation had never made him feel so alive once he had processed the initial shock of being struck so sharply in the chest. The statement confirmed causation for the immortal to circumventâ€”to avoid the potential opening for another attack, but instead the sensation had Jack falling deeply into the vast depths of his vulnerabilities.

Hiccup's line of fire had been meant to instill a warning shotâ€”but the target was unmovingâ€”this was too importantâ€”they'd been given a second chanceâ€”to force the truth out of hiding, and Jack couldn't help, in that instant, but to reach out towards the other boy's faceâ€”towards the delicacyâ€”the fragile symmetry of such an impressionable surface.

Staring deeply, he framed them so innocently in his handsâ€”the features that still hadn't felt the whiplash of the gun retract heatedlyâ€”knowing how easily they could be bent or brokenâ€”pulling forward so softly. The stakes had been raised, and their faces were almost touching, close enough that they could hardly notice the color in each other's eyes because the contact grew so terrifying and unpredictable once Jack stepped forward and forced Hiccup to hold him at gun point.

In such a slow, drawn out motion, he tilted his face downward in order to nudge the other's nose affectionatelyâ€”bone chilling blue eyes staring down the barrel without fearâ€”pooling and pouring upward as he spoke, "And what if I ask you not to?" his thumbs caressed the lengths of Hiccup's cheeks, supporting the weight that seemed to slip into his palms, as soundlessly as his voice, "Does that change anything?"

Hiccup was taking in the upward angle of Jack's inviting, exposed, and intentionally placed irises, slanting so stunningly into his own, and absorbing every muscle effortlesslyâ€”fixing unknowing fluctuations of emerald within the reflective surface that was emitting such honest emotions and distorting them into such indistinguishable shades of tension.

"...you change everything..." he breathed, crashing against Jack'sâ€”melting fire and ice into the sweetest burningâ€”exchanging forms as it misted onto their lips, and dissolved against their taste buds, "...you always have."

Unable to effectively ignore the asphyxiating aroma of smoke and cinnamon from filling his nostrils like an aphrodisiacâ€”Jack lost the necessary skills to resist, and had no other choice but to lean forward and taste it. Knees buckling as his lips aligned with the



irresistible innocence clashing against an unchaste frustration when Hiccup's mouth opened for him willingly; needing nothing other than the soft pressure of Jack's to convince them before green eyes were already closing, and his head was leaning sideways, wedging his lips even more perfectly between the other's.

"Then let me change your mind," the pallor boy begged him, mumbling against the motions of their kiss, losing his hands, and securing his grip—and for the moment, that dizzy-making moment, the immortal savored the sweet transfer of warmth that wrapped around him with a softness that felt so unforgiveable, like the true meaning of such a simple act was too sad this time to swim out of. So instead, Jack sank deeply into it before pulling away with so much self-restraint—steadily, soundlessly, and so very serious as he stopped, staring back gently. Hiccup's eyes both illuminated and extinguished at the same time—both enticed and offset by the implied meaning Jack left unspoken, reaching both of his hands up to hold onto the taller boy's shoulders when he found his words were in need of the extra support.

"...this really is important to you—" he exhaled with such uncertain surprise, absorbing all the transparent fears and desires transpiring in the eyes across from him, "—isn't it?" his grip tightened.

Jack felt the pressure as he straightened out to stand at his full height, continuing to stare in that strong, but silent way he always seemed to when the other was involved—with one hand cupped under Hiccup's chin even more gently than before, while he removed the other in order to extend the range of contact, folding his fingers along the almost absent, but tensely muscled curve of a nervous waist.

"I've been here for a long time too," he seemed to signify in agreement as he squeezed Hiccup's hip longingly, about to leave the other speechless in the sight of such simplicity that made it all the more heartbreaking, " And she's not the only one who's getting tired of waiting."

The final word, in and of itself, was an invitation for the silence to slip between them—so deprecating as all the clarity was stolen, forcing Hiccup to stare at the space his next few words would have to live up to—the emptiness they were now required to fill—eyes encircling the cavernous depth of feeling that was constantly expanding and contracting in the light of the guilt he couldn't conceal.

"I never realized that I was making you..." he trailed off, losing his voice before he could conjure the forbearance to say wait; not out of an ignorance towards it, but because he couldn't stand the thought of Jack's face if he were to realize it was an addition to his already flimsy apology. Something else that he had inadvertently inflicted. "And if I had, it never would've taken this long."

"But you didn't." Jack reminded him quietly, "And so it did—" He paused, toying with the idea of using his previous lack of proximity as ammunition before twisting the truth into something weightless, but so painfully watered down. As if it were meant to free Hiccup from the heaviest pressures of guilt and conscience, and drown Jack

under the diluted density that displaced the value of all the pain inside. "And I've been around for awhile now," he reduced three years so practically when it hurt so much more than he could say. "A lot longer than you think I have," he confessed under the strain of a voice that couldn't help but crackâ€"his lips trembledâ€"and it was enough to give way to the truth that cut the deepest of all. "I might be immortal now, Hiccupâ€" but don't think that means I'll wait forever."

"Butâ€"|"

"It's too hard to be around you," Jack interrupted, trying to smile, but it was weak at best, "I don't want to be your \_friend\_."

The voice across from the pallor teen cracked and choked before it could make a soundâ€"Hiccup knew what he'd meant, but the logic didn't seem to matter to the space between his chestâ€"and the rest was noise.

Jack froze, shoulders scrunching upwards like he was trying not to hear the tearsâ€"so heavy and profuseâ€"so uninhibited that they only seemed to unhinge the trembling boy's jaws, like the words had always been there, determined to spill out.

"If you think for a second that all you've ever been to me is my \_friend,\_ then you're an idiot," Hiccup accused him as it warped within the fluctuation of tears and intonation. Rising and falling rapidly with the exchange of oxygen, he staggered, sucking in a sharp breath that puffed out his chest just as insincerely as the strength he had left to resist this. "Did you hear me, Jack?" the air escaped all sudden and heavy like his lungs collapsing, "You're an \_idiot,\_ " he choked.

Jack's limbs had already begun to disengage from the other boy's proportions as he slipped back into estrangement, away from the resistance, and into a growl. "\_I'm\_ an idiot?" he demanded.

"\_Yeah,\_ " Hiccup asserted forcefully. "An idiot to ever assume this was \_easy\_ for me!" he yelled, straining his vocal cords, and curling his hands into tight fists that turned his knuckles white. "\_What part of you and I did you think I could just \_forget\_ about, Jack?" The bombs kept dropping, "Which details did you think could just \_slip\_ my mind? I still remember \_everything\_, so don't you \_dare\_ tell me how hard it isâ€"because you have \_never\_ made this easy for me."

"\_Never?\_"

Jack frowned, displacing the disdain from his body, but not the distance between them, observing how Hiccup had exhausted himself so unwillingly, but so equally unable to stop the words that came down like a waterfall under the weight of gravityâ€"so heavily.

So fluidly, but so fixedâ€"so strong, but so unsteady.

So unable to move on its own accord.

Such empty pressure.

Jack brought himself closer, "What aren't you telling me, Hiccup?"

The truth betrayed avoidance with immediate silence, and the small, unprepared boy's features fell in vain, closing his eyes and giving way to the wall, letting his back hit the surface in such a hard echo of defeatâ€”laughing as he slid down, contemptuously onto the floor.

"You know," he spoke evenly, eyes still closed, still projecting that terrible laughâ€”that awful, bitter noise, "I always thought it was funny how you were always accusing me of playing dumb when it was you who never noticed."

And that's when Jack learned that plastic hearts could still break just as easilyâ€”when the words gunned him downâ€”when the memory fell around him like an airborne attackâ€”clenching to the casualtiesâ€”the skeletons of sleeping dogs that wouldn't lieâ€”losing feeling so quickly to the shock...

"\_Why do you always do this?\_"\_

There was a familiar conversation standing in his wake, but there was so much debris floating around him as the two moments interposed; invariably saddening to see in the natural lighting that couldn't hide the glareâ€”the disfiguration of something so carefully concealed that it had never been clearer.\_  
><em>

"\_Isn't obvious?\_"\_

\_\_'T\_\_o both live and die on this day,'\_ \_Jack repeated, like a vow of service, closing his eyes before he could desert, '\_to both live and on this day'\_â€”and walked for this one last time, into the fray. Into the final moments.

"\_S-should it be?\_"\_

In that instant, Hiccup's eyes shot open, finding his friend immediately, and pouring across the room, mirroring a sadness that Jack didn't quite recognize. "You were supposed to know me better than \_anyone,\_" he stressed painfully, "and you couldn't even see the most \_obvious\_ thing about me."

"\_Why do you always have to play dumb?\_"\_

Jack's eyes clenched.

Already understanding \_why.\_

Why Hiccup couldn't even look at him right now.

\_\*\*\_\*\*"Years of experience."\*\*\_\*\*\_

\_Years.\_

His blue eyes saw the true meaning so sadly, understanding nowâ€”why this had always been so hardâ€”why Hiccup had resisted him so furiouslyâ€”\_That's itâ€”isn't it?\_ he asked himself, remembering the way his friend had both warmed up and withdrawn so flustered, and

guardedâ€"so terrified and confused.\_  
><em>

It had been\_ years.\_

"This was never supposed to happen," the other muttered, pushing Jack's arms away when they struggled to hold him. "It was never supposed to \_be\_ like this," he stressed, so evidently upset beyond either of their abilities to empathize, let alone express. "We were never supposed to \_change."\_

"It never had to change for you though...did it?" the winter reincarnate said all hushed and misplaced by the fact this had always existedâ€"that this was why Hiccup had tried to tell him that the way he loved him was differentâ€"tried to get lost in the physical motions of what was too hard for him to explain...what had always been too fragile to trust in the hands of the person who'd never seen it until now.

He felt an illusion shatter.

"...you've always felt this wayâ€|" Jack realized softly, such sadness in his eyes.

Hiccup drew his knees into his chest, too depleted to ever revisit this again if he didn't speak now.

"I always knew you were \_different\_. That something \_felt\_ different about being around youâ€|but we'd always been close," Hiccup trailed away, trying to frame this picture of how they'd fallen apart in his mind, "And I justâ€|\_didn't know\_...for a long time what any of it meantâ€|"

"What, \_what\_ meant?"

"What it meant when you started to look differentâ€"when I started looking \_at\_ you different."

"Looking different how?" Jack asked, heart in his throat, beating so fast that his adam's apple was rising and falling in unpredicted palpitations that outpaced his breathing.

"\_Good.\_" he answered reluctantly, but anything else was better than that god awful silence they would slip into in the absence of speech, "It was like, all of a sudden, I couldn't keep my eyes off of you, didn't \_want\_ to."

"...why did you ever say anythingâ€|" Jack reflected, too overwhelmed by the unexpected twist that had thrown this all back in his face to care about how stupid he must've looked kneeling down, and then slowly sitting backwards onto the floor as he folded his legs together. "Why didn't you ever \_tell\_ me?"

"It was easier to know that you didn't feel the same then it would've been to hear you say it," Hiccup breathed as strained, reddened, emerald eyes closed, pinching his face in such vertiginous exhaustion.

Jack crawled over to him this time, his heart going out to every syllable, regardless of how awkward he must have looked on the

surface; fumbling, tripping, and stumbling over the confession that changed everything. "I wouldn't have said that to you," he promised, forcing his arms completely around Hiccup that time.

His efforts lacked the strength and determination to fight, but the smaller boy still resisted, pushing gently at Jack's chest with his hands as he turned his face downward. "You don't know that, Jack. Nobody knows that."

"Well you should've found out...or tried to," his voice cracked, giving way, breaking down under what had always been right in front of him—"restraining the body he wouldn't let move away from his own. "We could have figured it out."

Hiccup spoke up and trailed off. "You just made me feel so—easy," his voice pulled away upsettingly, at both the inability to say these things in the same fashion as before, and the exposure of how the symptoms had only worsened over time.

Still-frames of constant attempts—of constant personal invasions melted against Jack's mind in a cluster fuck of caustic remarks, stolen kisses, and flying fists—the persistence and the resistance he'd never framed together so perfectly.

"You never thought I was serious—did you?"

"No."

"But why would I kiss you if I didn't mean it?"

"How should I know?" Hiccup asked, "You've always done whatever you want—when—and why ever you wanted to."

"I love you though," he released sadly, hushed against the second ever repetition, "You know that now."

Hiccup's body squirmed against the strong arms that constricted around his waist, trapping his arms between their chests as he used them as a way to pry back open the space. "But you didn't... not until you realized that somebody else did. You only wanted me, because you couldn't have me, and I can't let you pretend like it's anything else."

"No, I want you," Jack emphasized, intentionally correcting from past to present tense, "because I love you."

"Love?" Hiccup asked, "You don't even know what love could do to us, Jack."

"It could save us," he insisted.

Emerald eyes rounded sadly, "It'll destroy us."

"Then destroy me," Jack lifted them both to their feet, tangling his arms through the others proportions, "I don't care if I sink or swim through it—I don't care if you drown me."

The emphasis on drown seemed to weigh heavily, coloring the guilt—the vibrancy of such deeply rooted stigma that curled Hiccup's body unreceptively against the other's uncoordinated

embrace. "You wouldn't \_ever\_ have to drown if I'd taught you how to swim." his face burrowed into a strong chest, "I haven't stopped thinking about that...that it's all \_my\_ fault..." Slender fingers were dangling over Jack's shoulders, reaching down and furrowing into clumps of fabric on his back, clinging to his sweatshirt like a source of protection, and instinct took hold of all his senses. Holding his friend even more tightly, yet with such gentle strength, the guardian brought their entangled limbs to the edge of the bed. "\_Shhh\_" he murmured against the other's hair, leaning them forward, laying Hiccup's back against the mattress before he followedâ€"crawling over the other's trembling frame until his hands were on either side of tousled auburn hair, and his lower half sank against his stomachâ€"not sexuallyâ€"just in this slow, sort of motion that had played out into such a vulnerable stance.

"It's not your fault," he hesitated forward, his face hovering over the other boy's before kissing him regardless, lowering his mouth and planting his lips with the most genuine conviction, "And I would do it a hundred times over to keep you safe."

"But..." Hiccup's eyes opened, glistening through half-formed tears "...but I'm scared," he admitted, reaching up into the sail-like draping of Jack's shirt hanging away from his frame.

"We don't have to decide anything tonight, you don't have to promise me \_anything\_" Jack spoke softly. "I meant what I said when I wanted to take this slow, and I've already done enough damage for one night," he sighed, gradually pulling in the opposite direction, intending to give them the intermission they needed to recover from this conversation, and the connection they'd reformed too soon to twist so heavily. "I'll come back tomorrow," he promised, pulling away, but his body gave in when he'd risen a few centimeters only to feel the other tugging down persistently on his clothing, stealing his balanceâ€"and finding himself desperately fitting into the impressions they were making in the bed.

"Please," Hiccup's voice cracked, straining as he held the other in place, "just don't go, don't go anywhere," his arms pulled Jack's face more deeply into his shoulder after it had fallen alongside his neck, "just stop \_leaving.\_"

"Okay," he consented softly, the smooth skin beneath his face so warm, so familiar, and so easy to sink his whole body into the source of it, flattening against Hiccup's chest, and curling his legs up into the other boy's sideâ€"never expecting the smaller pair of hands that pulled his face so close in those few seconds and left his eyelashes to flutter open and close against the shock that took hold of his body when he felt the pressure of a kiss he hadn't initiated.

"I don't want to talk anymore," Hiccup spoke almost inaudibly, establishing such a close range of contact, leaving the bridge of Jack's nose to absorb all the color in his face, "I just want to kiss you," his features pulled forward, catching and willing the other's into the parting of lips and exchange of tongues, releasing softer words with his fingers entangled through the beautiful mess of ghost-white hair. "I just want tonightâ€"|."

And Jack understood more than ever, reconnecting their faces in the deepest sort of passion, cementing how much they both needed to get

lost in each other without consequence. "You can have anything you want," Jack breathed against the exchange, losing all resistance as the other's hands traveled beneath his shirt, swaying across his bare skin before stopping to hold onto the shapely protrusion of his hips, causing the pallor boy to shudder when Hiccup pulled them into his own, "even if that means I wantâ€" but the words weren't required, "I'm \_yours\_," Jack pushed his lips against the fading sound of the other's voice, joined in unspoken understanding as they sunk into inseparabilityâ€"pulling, grabbing, repositioning, and slipping out of articles of clothing so fast with fumbling fingersâ€"shirts up and over heads, arms exposed out of sleeves, and chests pulled so closely into the arousal of flesh on fleshâ€"so insatiably in sync that you'd never thought they'd been fighting each other so hard. "I'm sorryâ€", " Hiccup breathed heavily, wrapping his arms suddenly around the other's slender neck, his upper body rising to meet his friend's face, "â€"that I don't know how else to say this." "and so am Iâ€", " Jack's face dipped downward, smashing into lips that broke Hiccup's balanceâ€"pulling his chest forward into the kiss, then laying him flat on his back where he brought Jack down on top of him, "for never giving you any other way," his lips continued to pull so swiftly, but shook against the strength of everything bursting through his chest, causing Hiccup's to tremble beneath the contrast. "What's the matter?" he looked up, arms around the length of the neck he'd pulled away fromâ€" shivers straining against the hands that had begun to hesitate in their wanderingâ€"forcing crystal blue eyes to melt against the transfer, "we don't have to do anything you don't want to," he assured Hiccup, so overwhelmed, so vulnerable lying in nearly nothing at all, and so unsure why it had all turned to tearsâ€"fixed, but no longer frozen, falling down and cascading in droplets.

Hiccup disengaged his fingers when everything above him had begun to rain, pelting his skin is such soft tears as he reached out to steady the shaking, "Jack," his entire upper body lifted into a sitting position this time, compelling the other's to rise in motion with it, "you don't need to \_prove\_ anything to me."

The tears wavered away in waves as the space in Jack's heart palpitated uncontrollably, accelerating reality back into a five-hundred-mile an hour rush as the temporary bliss of their crash broke back into disjoining scenes of two separate people. Suddenly his bare chest was shivering, his abdomen clenching, "but what if I don't get another chance to?"

"I told you I wanted to figure us out," Hiccup slipped back into shyness, blushing under the exposure of his entire midriff, and the half undone belt loops and fumbled buttons they'd teased open before leaving the tasks incomplete. "Seeing you again has been the hardest thing I've ever had to do, and I admit that part of me hates this," he swallowed, unable to take back the words they'd swappedâ€"the reasons they'd challengedâ€"and all the ends they'd left wide open, "but I still meant every word, I still want this."

Jack's eyes grew expansive, straining to frame the full extent of all he was hearing, part exhausted, part bewildered, and partially unable to place it in conversationâ€"unaware of whether to pull into or away from what they were constantly giving up and taking back. "I don't want to share you though," he admitted softly, sadly, and sure Hiccup would refuse the reality of it, but instead felt the curving incline of skin press back warmly all over his ownâ€"never commenting on how cold, and lifeless it must have really felt, "and I want to make sure

you don't have to," the other insisted.

"How can you just keep changing your mind," Jack's intonation pulled away, catching so heavily on the reopening of insincerity.

"Well you asked me if you could," green eyes came in closer, tipping the other's face on an angle when his fingers folded underneath the chin that had been pressed so vulnerably against his shoulder, "but what I forgot to mention is that you already did."

Innocent auras clouded but pooled, transfixed, and wanting so badly to believe every word—"never remembering feeling quite so exposed, "How?"

"Because I did this to you," Hiccup edged inward, his eyes dropping to the space of parted flesh that he hesitated to meet, so saddened by the eternity that isolated the most important thing.

Death was too sensitive to try and incorporate into a conversation that was already so heavy though—"lacking all consistency or continuity as neither could stop twisting and contorting its symmetry"—and it was enough to crack beneath Jack's collapsing vocals, the inability rendering him hostile. "I don't want your pity," he snapped.

"Good, because I don't want to pity you," Hiccup continued, pressing his lips on and off, losing hesitance to the ever tipping balance between them, "I don't even want to fix you—" he breathed in steadily, exhaling slowly, and closing his eyes as Jack watched his lips wriggle against the exchange of forming words, "I just want to bring you back to life."

"Why?" Jack's voice cracked under the pressure of Hiccup's words falling like a hammer on the tip of an iceberg, fissuring down so deeply into the caverns of everything the redhead had been cataloguing this whole time—"the strong but so unsteady way Jack was only able to feign his confidences that had long since crashed and broken beneath the literal waves. "Part of me died," he turned away sharply, fumbling for anything, "I can't get it back."

"Because you need to let it go," Hiccup continuously caught him off guard. "You've kept it inside you for too long, but you don't need to keep burying it all anymore...because I want to know what's down there," his wording strayed, both of them so god damn red in the face. "I've never wanted to get under your skin so badly before as I did last night. That's why."

"To see if I was even still alive?" he guessed, slipping into still frames that fell self-consciously under the specificity that left his flaws in unfamiliar free fall.

"No, it was because I'd never seen you look that way before," Hiccup pushed back ghost like strands. "So incomplete," he spoke softly, adjusting so unusually to how naturally the other was folding beneath his touch, "It's because all I can remember thinking to myself was how many pieces you were in, how they all fell apart right in front of me..." he brought Jack's face closer, "...and that I'd never seen anything look quite so beautiful when it was broken."



\_\*\*-.--.--.-\*\*\_

\_\*\*BAM!\*\*\*\_

\*\*\_that JUST happened.\_\*\*

End  
file.